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ASTRAL EDITION

THE WRITINGS

OF

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

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Secretary

Steeple

"*I must insist on knowing where are the Eustace Diamonds.*"

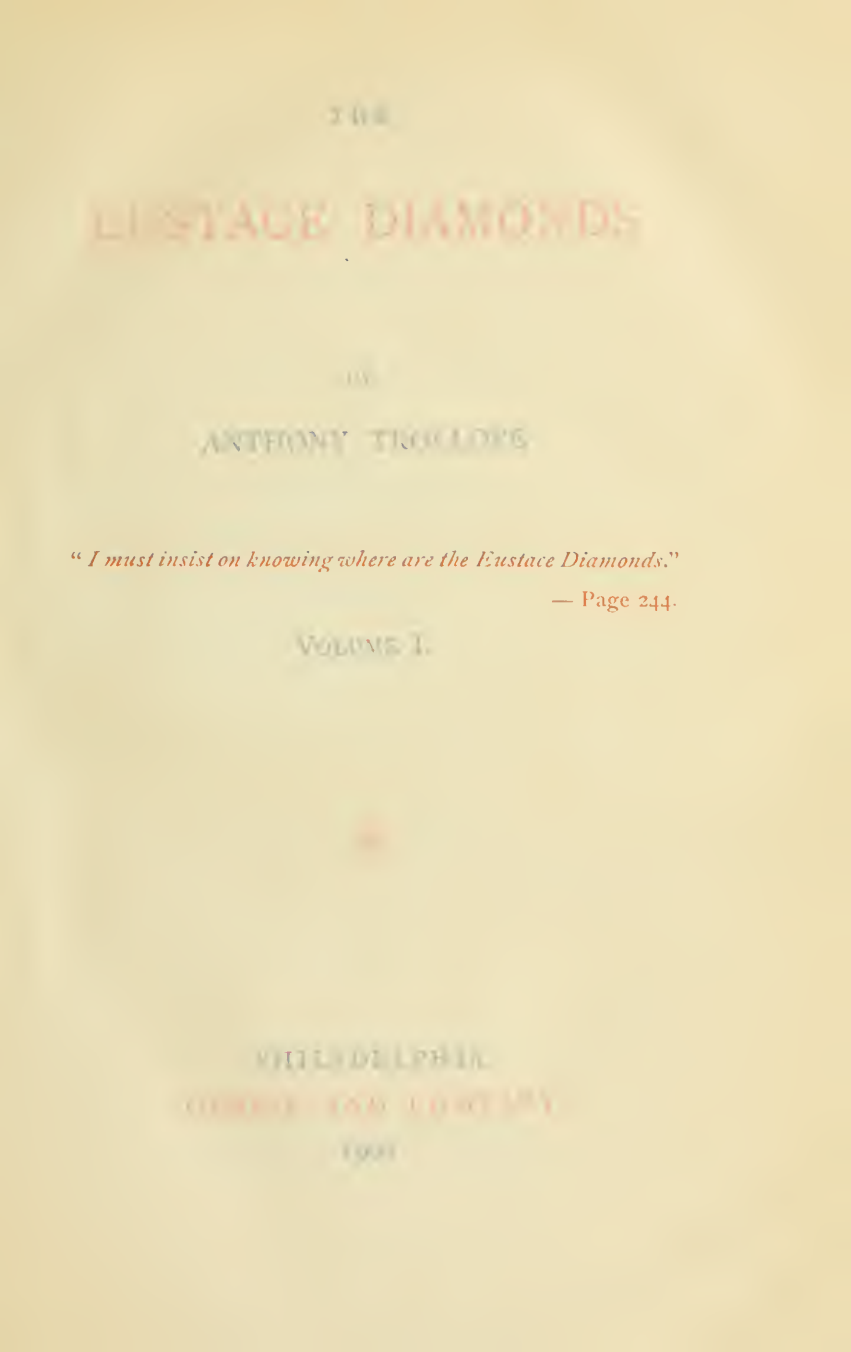
— Page 244.

THE

EUSTACE DIAMONDS

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE



"*I must insist on knowing where are the Eustace Diamonds.*"

— Page 244.

VOLUME I.

PHILADELPHIA
GEBBIE AND COMPANY
1901

THE

EUSTACE DIAMONDS

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

VOLUME I.

PHILADELPHIA
GEBBIE AND COMPANY
1902

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THE EUSTACE DIAMONDS.

CHAPTER I.

LIZZIE GREYSTOCK.

It was admitted by all her friends, and also by her enemies — who were in truth the more numerous and active body of the two — that Lizzie Greystock had done very well with herself. We will tell the story of Lizzie Greystock from the beginning, but we will not dwell over it at great length, as we might do if we loved her. She was the only child of old Admiral Greystock, who in the latter years of his life was much perplexed by the possession of a daughter. The Admiral was a man who liked whist, wine — and wickedness in general we may perhaps say, and whose ambition it was to live every day of his life up to the end of it. People say that he succeeded, and that the whist, wine, and wickedness were there, at the side even of his dying bed. He had no particular fortune, and yet his daughter, when she was little more than a child, went about everywhere with jewels on her fingers, and red gems hanging round her neck, and yellow gems pendent from her ears, and white gems shining in her black hair. She was hardly nineteen when her father died and she was taken home by that dreadful old termagant, her

aunt, Lady Linlithgow. Lizzie would have sooner gone to any other friend or relative, had there been any other friend or relative to take her possessed of a house in town. Her uncle, Dean Greystock, of Bobsborough, would have had her — and a more good-natured old soul than the dean's wife did not exist, and there were three pleasant, good-tempered girls in the deanery, who had made various little efforts at friendship with their cousin Lizzie — but Lizzie had higher ideas for herself than life in the deanery at Bobsborough. She hated Lady Linlithgow. During her father's lifetime, when she hoped to be able to settle herself before his death, she was not in the habit of concealing her hatred for Lady Linlithgow. Lady Linlithgow was not indeed amiable or easily managed. But when the Admiral died, Lizzie did not hesitate for a moment in going to the old "vulturess," as she was in the habit of calling the countess in her occasional correspondence with the girls at Bobsborough.

The Admiral died greatly in debt — so much so that it was a marvel how tradesmen had trusted him. There was literally nothing left for anybody; and Messrs. Harter & Benjamin of Old Bond street condescended to call at Lady Linlithgow's house in Brook street, and to beg that the jewels supplied during the last twelve months might be returned. Lizzie protested that there were no jewels — nothing to signify, nothing worth restoring. Lady Linlithgow had seen the diamonds, and demanded an explanation. They had been "parted with," by the Admiral's orders — so said Lizzie — for the payment of other debts. Of this Lady Linlithgow did not believe a word, but she could not get at any exact truth. At that moment the jewels were in very

truth pawned for money which had been necessary for Lizzie's needs. Certain things must be paid for — one's own maid for instance — and one must have some money in one's pocket for railway-trains and little knick-knacks which cannot be had on credit. Lizzie when she was nineteen knew how to do without money as well as most girls; but there were calls which she could not withstand, debts which even she must pay.

She did not, however, drop her acquaintance with Messrs. Harter & Benjamin. Before her father had been dead eight months, she was closeted with Mr. Benjamin, transacting a little business with him. She had come to him, she told him, the moment she was of age, and was willing to make herself responsible for the debt, signing any bill, note, or document which the firm might demand from her to that effect. Of course she had nothing of her own, and never would have anything. That Mr. Benjamin knew. As for payment of the debt by Lady Linlithgow, who for a countess was as poor as Job, Mr. Benjamin, she was quite sure, did not expect anything of the kind. But ——. Then Lizzie paused, and Mr. Benjamin, with the sweetest and wittiest of smiles, suggested that perhaps Miss Greystock was going to be married. Lizzie, with a pretty maiden blush, admitted that such a catastrophe was probable. She had been asked in marriage by Sir Florian Eustace. Now Mr. Benjamin knew, as all the world knew, that Sir Florian Eustace was a very rich man indeed; a man in no degree embarrassed, and who could pay any amount of jewellers' bills for which claim might be made upon him. Well, what did Miss Greystock want? Mr. Benjamin did not suppose that Miss Greystock was actuated simply by a desire to

have her old bills paid by her future husband. Miss Greystock wanted a loan sufficient to take the jewels out of pawn. She would then make herself responsible for the full amount due. Mr. Benjamin said that he would make a few inquiries. "But you won't betray me," said Lizzie, "for the match might be off." Mr. Benjamin promised to be more than cautious.

There was not so much of falsehood as might have been expected in the statement which Lizzie Greystock made to the jeweller. It was not true that she was of age, and therefore no future husband would be legally liable for any debt which she might then contract; and it was not true that Sir Florian Eustace had asked her in marriage. Those two little blemishes in her statement must be admitted. But it was true that Sir Florian was at her feet, and that by a proper use of her various charms, the pawned jewels included, she might bring him to an offer. Mr. Benjamin made his inquiries, and acceded to the proposal. He did not tell Miss Greystock that she had lied to him in that matter of her age, though he had discovered the lie. Sir Florian would no doubt pay the bill for his wife without any arguments as to the legality of the claim. From such information as Mr. Benjamin could acquire, he thought that there would be a marriage, and that the speculation was on the whole in his favour. Lizzie recovered her jewels and Mr. Benjamin was in possession of a promissory note purporting to have been executed by a person who was no longer a minor. The jeweller was ultimately successful in his views, and so was the lady.

Lady Linlithgow saw the jewels come back, one by one, ring added to ring on the little taper fingers, the

rubies for the neck and the pendent yellow earrings. Though Lizzie was in mourning for her father, still these things were allowed to be visible. The countess was not the woman to see them without inquiry, and she inquired vigorously. She threatened, stormed, and protested. She attempted even a raid upon the young lady's jewel-box. But she was not successful. Lizzie snapped and snarled and held her own, for at that time the match with Sir Florian was near its accomplishment, and the countess understood too well the value of such a disposition of her niece to risk it at the moment by any open rupture. The little house in Brook street — for the house was very small and very comfortless — a house that had been squeezed in, as it were, between two others without any fitting space for it — did not contain a happy family. One bedroom, and that the biggest, was appropriated to the Earl of Linlithgow, the son of the countess, a young man who passed perhaps five nights in town during the year. Other inmate there was none besides the aunt and the niece and the four servants, of whom one was Lizzie's own maid. Why should such a countess have troubled herself with the custody of such a niece? Simply because the countess regarded it as a duty. Lady Linlithgow was worldly, stingy, ill-tempered, selfish, and mean. Lady Linlithgow would cheat a butcher out of a mutton chop, or a cook out of a month's wages, if she could do so with some slant of legal wind in her favour. She would tell any number of lies to carry a point in what she believed to be social success. It was said of her that she cheated at cards. In backbiting, no venomous old woman between Bond street and Park lane could beat her — or, more wonderful

still, no venomous old man at the clubs. But nevertheless she recognised certain duties, and performed them, though she hated them. She went to church, not merely that people might see her there — as to which in truth she cared nothing — but because she thought it was right. And she took in Lizzie Greystock, whom she hated almost as much as she did sermons, because the Admiral's wife had been her sister, and she recognised a duty. But, having thus bound herself to Lizzie — who was a beauty — of course it became the first object of her life to get rid of Lizzie by a marriage. And though she would have liked to think that Lizzie would be tormented all her days, though she thoroughly believed that Lizzie deserved to be tormented, she set her heart upon a splendid match. She would at any rate be able to throw it daily in her niece's teeth that the splendour was of her doing. Now a marriage with Sir Florian Eustace would be very splendid, and therefore she was unable to go into the matter of the jewels with that rigour which in other circumstances she would certainly have displayed.

The match with Sir Florian Eustace — for a match it came to be — was certainly very splendid. Sir Florian was a young man about eight and twenty, very handsome, of immense wealth, quite unencumbered, moving in the best circles, popular, so far prudent that he never risked his fortune on the turf or in gambling-houses, with the reputation of a gallant soldier, and a most devoted lover. There were two facts concerning him which might, or might not, be taken as objections. He was vicious, and — he was dying. When a friend, intending to be kind, hinted the latter circumstance to

Lady Linlithgow, the countess blinked and winked and nodded, and then swore that she had procured medical advice on the subject. Medical advice declared that Sir Florian was not more likely to die than another man — if only he would get married; all of which statement on her ladyship's part was a lie. When the same friend hinted the same thing to Lizzie herself, Lizzie resolved that she would have her revenge upon that friend. At any rate the courtship went on.

We have said that Sir Florian was vicious; but he was not altogether a bad man, nor was he vicious in the common sense of the word. He was one who denied himself no pleasure let the cost be what it might in health, pocket, or morals. Of sin or wickedness he had probably no distinct idea. In virtue, as an attribute of the world around him, he had no belief. Of honour he thought very much, and had conceived a somewhat noble idea that because much had been given to him much was demanded of him. He was haughty, polite, and very generous. There was almost a nobility even about his vices. And he had a special gallantry of which it is hard to say whether it is or is not to be admired. They told him that he was like to die — very like to die, if he did not change his manner of living. Would he go to Algiers for a period? Certainly not. He would do no such thing. If he died, there was his brother John left to succeed him. And the fear of death never cast a cloud over that grandly beautiful brow. They had all been short-lived — the Eustaces. Consumption had swept a hecatomb of victims from the family. But still they were grand people, and never were afraid of death.

And then Sir Florian fell in love. Discussing this

matter with his brother, who was perhaps his only intimate friend, he declared that if the girl he loved would give herself to him, he would make what atonement he could to her for his own early death by a princely settlement. John Eustace, who was somewhat nearly concerned in the matter, raised no objection to this proposal. There was ever something grand about these Eustaces. Sir Florian was a grand gentleman; but surely he must have been dull of intellect, slow of discernment, blear-eyed in his ways about the town, when he took Lizzie Greystock — of all the women whom he could find in the world — to be the purest, the truest, and the noblest. It has been said of Sir Florian that he did not believe in virtue. He freely expressed disbelief in the virtue of women around him — in the virtue of women of all ranks. But he believed in his mother and sisters as though they were heaven-born; and he was one who could believe in his wife as though she were the queen of heaven. He did believe in Lizzie Greystock, thinking that intellect, purity, truth, and beauty, each perfect in its degree, were combined in her. The intellect and beauty were there; but for the purity and truth, how could it have been that such a one as Sir Florian Eustace should have been so blind!

Sir Florian was not indeed a clever man; but he believed himself to be a fool, and believing himself to be a fool, he desired, nay, painfully longed, for some of those results of cleverness which might, he thought, come to him from contact with a clever woman. Lizzie read poetry well, and she read verses to him, sitting very near to him, almost in the dark, with a shaded lamp throwing its light on her book. He was

astonished to find how sweet a thing was poetry. By himself he could never read a line, but as it came from her lips it seemed to charm him. It was a new pleasure, and one which, though he had ridiculed it, he had so often coveted! And then she told him of such wondrous thoughts, such wondrous joys in the world which would come from thinking! He was proud, I have said, and haughty; but he was essentially modest and humble in his self-estimation. How divine was this creature, whose voice to him was that of a goddess!

Then he spoke out to her with his face a little turned from her. Would she be his wife? But before she answered him, let her listen to him. They had told him that an early death must probably be his fate. He did not himself feel that it must be so. Sometimes he was ill, very ill; but often he was well. If she would run the risk with him he would endeavour to make her such recompense as might come from his wealth. The speech he made was somewhat long, and as he made it he hardly looked into her face.

But it was necessary to him that he should be made to know by some signal from her how it was going with her feelings. As he spoke of his danger, there came a gurgling little trill of wailing from her throat, a soft, almost musical sound of woe, which seemed to add an unaccustomed eloquence to his words. When he spoke of his own hope the sound was somewhat changed, but it was still continued. When he alluded to the disposition of his fortune, she was at his feet. "Not that," she said, "not that!" He lifted her, and with his arm round her waist he tried to tell her what it would be his duty to do for her. She escaped from his arm and would not listen to him. But — but ——!

When he began to talk of love again, she stood with her forehead bowed against his bosom. Of course the engagement was then a thing accomplished.

But still the cup might slip from her lips. Her father was now dead but ten months, and what answer could she make when the common pressing petition for an early marriage was poured into her ear? This was in July, and it would never do that he should be left, unmarried, to the rigour of another winter. She looked into his face and knew that she had cause for fear. Oh, heavens! if all these golden hopes should fall to the ground, and she should come to be known only as the girl who had been engaged to the late Sir Florian! But he himself pressed the marriage on the same ground. "They tell me," he said, "that I had better get a little south by the beginning of October. I won't go alone. You know what I mean — eh, Lizzie?" Of course she married him in September.

They spent a honeymoon of six weeks at a place he had in Scotland, and the first blow came upon him as they passed through London, back from Scotland, on their way to Italy. Messrs. Harter & Benjamin sent in their little bill, which amounted to something over £400, and other little bills were sent in. Sir Florian was a man by whom all such bills would certainly be paid, but by whom they would not be paid without his understanding much and conceiving more as to their cause and nature. How much he really did understand she was never quite aware; but she did know that he detected her in a positive falsehood. She might certainly have managed the matter better than she did; and had she admitted everything there might probably have been but few words about it. She did

not, however, understand the nature of the note she had signed, and thought that simply new bills would be presented by the jewellers to her husband. She gave a false account of the transaction, and the lie was detected. I do not know that she cared very much. As she was utterly devoid of true tenderness, so also was she devoid of conscience. They went abroad, however; and by the time the winter was half over in Naples, he knew what his wife was; — and before the end of the spring he was dead.

She had so far played her game well, and had won her stakes. What regrets, what remorse she suffered when she knew that he was going from her, and then knew that he was gone, who can say? As man is never strong enough to take unmixed delight in good, so may we presume also that he cannot be quite so weak as to find perfect satisfaction in evil. There must have been qualms as she looked at his dying face, soured with the disappointment she had brought upon him, and listened to the harsh querulous voice that was no longer eager in the expressions of love. There must have been some pang when she reflected that the cruel wrong which she had inflicted on him had probably hurried him to his grave. As a widow, in the first solemnity of her widowhood, she was wretched and would see no one. Then she returned to England and shut herself up in a small house at Brighton. Lady Linlithgow offered to go to her, but she begged that she might be left to herself. For a few short months the awe arising from the rapidity with which it had all occurred did afflict her. Twelve months since she had hardly known the man who was to be her husband. Now she was a widow — a widow very richly endowed

—and she bore beneath her bosom the fruit of her husband's love.

But, even in these early days, friends and enemies did not hesitate to say that Lizzie Greystock had done very well with herself; for it was known by all concerned that in the settlements made she had been treated with unwonted generosity.

CHAPTER II.

LADY EUSTACE.

THERE were circumstances in her position which made it impossible that Lizzie Greystock, or Lady Eustace, as we must now call her, should be left altogether to herself in the modest widow's retreat which she had found at Brighton. It was then April, and it was known that if all things went well with her she would be a mother before the summer was over. On what the Fates might ordain in this matter immense interests were dependent. If a son should be born he would inherit everything, subject, of course, to his mother's settlement. If a daughter, to her would belong the great personal wealth which Sir Florian had owned at the time of his death. Should there be no son, John Eustace, the brother, would inherit the estates in Yorkshire which had been the backbone of the Eustace wealth. Should no child be born, John Eustace would inherit everything that had not been settled upon or left to the widow. Sir Florian had made a settlement immediately before his marriage, and a will immediately afterwards. Of what he had done then, nothing had been altered in those sad Italian days. The settlement had been very generous. The whole property in Scotland was to belong to Lizzie for her life, and after her death was to go to a second son, if such second son there should be. By

the will money was left to her — more than would be needed for any possible temporary emergency. When she knew how it all was arranged, as far as she did know it, she was aware that she was a rich woman. For so clever a woman she was infinitely ignorant as to the possession and value of money and land and income, though, perhaps, not more ignorant than are most young girls under twenty-one. As for the Scotch property, she thought that it was her own forever, because there could not now be a second son, and yet was not quite sure whether it would be her own at all if she had no son. Concerning that sum of money left to her, she did not know whether it was to come out of the Scotch property or be given to her separately, and whether it was to come annually or to come only once. She had received, while still in Naples, a letter from the family lawyer, giving her such details of the will as it was necessary that she should know, and now she longed to ask questions, to have her belongings made plain to her, and to realise her wealth. She had brilliant prospects; and yet, through it all, there was a sense of loneliness that nearly killed her. Would it not have been much better if her husband would have lived, and still worshipped her, and still allowed her to read poetry to him? But she had read no poetry to him after that affair of Messrs. Harter & Benjamin.

This has, or will have, but little to do with these days, and may be hurried on through the twelve, or even twenty-four months which followed the death of poor Sir Florian. The question of the heirship, however, was very grave; and early in the month of May Lady Eustace was visited by her husband's uncle, Bishop Eustace, of Bobsborough. The bishop had been the

younger brother of Sir Florian's father, was at this time about fifty, very active and very popular, and was one who stood high in the world, even among bishops. He suggested to his niece-in-law that it was very expedient that, during her coming hour of trial, she should not absent herself from her husband's family, and at last persuaded her to take up her residence at the palace at Bobsborough till such time as the event should be over. Lady Eustace was taken to the palace, and in due time a son was born. John, who was now the uncle of the heir, came down, and, with the frankest good-humour, declared that he would devote himself to the little head of the family. He had been left as guardian, and the management of the great family estates was to be in his hands. Lizzie had read no poetry to him, and he had never liked her, and the bishop did not like her, and the ladies of the bishop's family disliked her very much, and it was thought by them that the dean's people — the Dean of Bobsborough was Lizzie's uncle — were not very fond of Lizzie since Lizzie had so raised herself in the world as to want no assistance from them. But still they were bound to do their duty by her as the widow of the late and the mother of the present baronet. And they did not find much cause of complaining as to Lizzie's conduct in these days. In that matter of the great family diamond necklace, which certainly should not have been taken to Naples at all, and as to which the jeweller had told the lawyer and the lawyer had told John Eustace that it certainly should not now be detained among the widow's own private property, the bishop strongly recommended that nothing should be said at present. The mistake, if there was a mistake,

could be remedied at any time. And nothing in those very early days was said about the great Eustace necklace which afterwards became so famous.

Why Lizzie should have been so generally disliked by the Eustaces it might be hard to explain. While she remained at the palace she was very discreet, and perhaps demure. It may be said they disliked her expressed determination to cut her aunt, Lady Linlithgow; for they knew that Lady Linlithgow had been, at any rate, a friend to Lizzie Greystock. There are people who can be wise within a certain margin, but beyond that commit great imprudences. Lady Eustace submitted herself to the palace people for that period of her prostration, but she could not hold her tongue as to her future intentions. She would, too, now and then ask of Mrs. Eustace and even of her daughter an eager, anxious question about her own property. "She is dying to handle her money," said Mrs. Eustace to the bishop. "She is only like the rest of the world in that," said the bishop. "If she would be really open, I would n't mind it," said Mrs. Eustace. None of them liked her, and she did not like them.

She remained at the palace for six months, and at the end of that time she went to her own place in Scotland. Mrs. Eustace had strongly advised her to ask her aunt, Lady Linlithgow, to accompany her, but in refusing to do this Lizzie was quite firm. She had endured Lady Linlithgow for that year between her father's death and her marriage; she was now beginning to dare to hope for the enjoyment of the good things which she had won, and the presence of the dowager-countess, "the vulturess," was certainly not one of these good things. In what her enjoyment was

to consist, she had not as yet quite formed a definite conclusion. She liked jewels. She liked admiration. She liked the power of being arrogant to those around her. And she liked good things to eat. But there were other matters that were also dear to her. She did like music, though it may be doubted whether she would ever play it or even listen to it alone. She did like reading, and especially the reading of poetry, though even in this she was false and pretentious, skipping, pretending to have read, lying about books, and making up her market of literature for outside admiration at the easiest possible cost of trouble. And she had some dream of being in love, and would take delight even in building castles in the air, which she would people with friends and lovers whom she would make happy with the most open-hearted benevolence. She had theoretical ideas of life which were not bad, but in practice she had gained her objects, and she was in a hurry to have liberty to enjoy them.

There was considerable anxiety in the palace in reference to the future mode of life of Lady Eustace. Had it not been for that baby-heir, of course there would have been no cause for interference; but the rights of that baby were so serious and important that it was almost impossible not to interfere. The mother, however, gave some little signs that she did not intend to submit to much interference, and there was no real reason why she should not be as free as air. But did she really intend to go down to Portray Castle all alone — that is, with her baby and nurses? This was ended by an arrangement, in accordance with which she was accompanied by her eldest cousin, Ellinor Greystock, a lady who was just ten years her senior. There could

hardly be a better woman than Ellinor Greystock, or a more good-humoured, kindly being. After many debates in the deanery and in the palace, for there was much friendship between the two ecclesiastical establishments, the offer was made and the advice given. Ellinor had accepted the martyrdom on the understanding that if the advice were accepted she was to remain at Portray Castle for three months. After a long discussion between Lady Eustace and the bishop's wife the offer was accepted, and the two ladies went to Scotland together.

During those three months the widow still bided her time. Of her future ideas of life she said not a word to her companion. Of her infant she said very little. She would talk of books, choosing such books as her cousin did not read; and she would interlard her conversation with much Italian, because her cousin did not know the language. There was a carriage kept by the widow, and they had themselves driven out together. Of real companionship there was none. Lizzie was biding her time, and at the end of the three months Miss Greystock thankfully, and, indeed, of necessity, returned to Bobsborough. "I 've done no good," she said to her mother, "and have been very uncomfortable." "My dear," said her mother, "we have disposed of three months out of a two years' period of danger. In two years from Sir Florian's death she will be married again."

When this was said Lizzie had been a widow nearly a year, and had bided her time upon the whole discreetly. Some foolish letters she had written, chiefly to the lawyer about her money and property; and some foolish things she had said, as when she told

Ellinor Greystock that the Portray property was her own forever, to do what she liked with it. The sum of money left to her by her husband had by that time been paid into her own hands, and she had opened a banker's account. The revenues from the Scotch estate, some £4,000 a year, were clearly her own for life. The family diamond necklace was still in her possession, and no answer had been given by her to a postscript to a lawyer's letter in which a little advice had been given respecting it. At the end of another year, when she had just reached the age of twenty-two, and had completed her second year of widowhood, she was still Lady Eustace, thus contradicting the prophecy made by the dean's wife. It was then spring, and she had a house of her own in London. She had broken openly with Lady Linlithgow. She had opposed, though not absolutely refused, all overtures of brotherly care from John Eustace. She had declined a further invitation, both for herself and for her child, to the palace. And she had positively asserted her intention of keeping the diamonds. Her late husband, she said, had given the diamonds to her. As they were supposed to be worth £10,000, and were really family diamonds, the matter was felt by all concerned to be one of much importance. And she was oppressed by a heavy load of ignorance, which became serious from the isolation of her position. She had learned to draw cheques, but she had no other correct notion as to business. She knew nothing as to spending money, saving it, or investing it. Though she was clever, sharp, and greedy, she had no idea what her money would do, and what it would not; and there was no one whom she would trust to tell her. She had

a young cousin, a barrister, a son of the dean's, whom she perhaps liked better than any other of her relations, but she declined advice even from her friend the barrister. She would have no dealings on her own behalf with the old family solicitor of the Eustaces, the gentleman who had now applied very formally for the restitution of the diamonds, but had appointed other solicitors to act for her. Messrs. Mowbray & Mopus were of opinion that as the diamonds had been given into her hands by her husband without any terms as to their surrender, no one could claim them. Of the manner in which the diamonds had been placed in her hands no one knew more than she chose to tell.

But when she started with her house in town — a modest little house in Mount street, near the park — just two years after her husband's death, she had a large circle of acquaintances. The Eustace people, and the Greystock people, and even the Linlithgow people, did not entirely turn their backs upon her. The countess, indeed, was very venomous, as she well might be; but then the countess was known for her venom. The dean and his family were still anxious that she should be encouraged to discreet living, and, though they feared many things, thought that they had no ground for open complaint. The Eustace people were forbearing, and hoped the best. "D—— the necklace," John Eustace had said, and the bishop unfortunately had heard him say it! "John," said the prelate, "whatever is to become of the bauble you might express your opinion in more sensible language." "I beg your lordship's pardon," said John, "I only mean to say that I think we should n't trouble ourselves about a few stones." But the family lawyer,

Mr. Camperdown, would by no means take this view of the matter. It was, however, generally thought that the young widow opened her campaign more prudently than had been expected.

And now as so much has been said of the character and fortune and special circumstances of Lizzie Greystock, who became Lady Eustace as a bride, and Lady Eustace as a widow and a mother, all within the space of twelve months, it may be as well to give some description of her person and habits, such as they were at the period in which our story is supposed to have its commencement. It must be understood in the first place that she was very lovely; much more so, indeed, now than when she had fascinated Sir Florian. She was small, but taller than she looked to be, for her form was perfectly symmetrical. Her feet and hands might have been taken as models by a sculptor. Her figure was lithe, and soft, and slim, and slender. If it had a fault it was this, that it had in it too much of movement. There were some who said that she was almost snake-like in her rapid bendings and the almost too easy gestures of her body; for she was much given to action and to the expression of her thought by the motion of her limbs. She might certainly have made her way as an actress, had fortune called upon her to earn her bread in that fashion. And her voice would have suited the stage. It was powerful when she called upon it for power; but, at the same time, flexible and capable of much pretence at feeling. She could bring it to a whisper that would almost melt your heart with tenderness, as she had melted Sir Florian's, when she sat near to him reading poetry; and then she could raise it to a pitch of indignant wrath befitting a Lady

Macbeth when her husband ventured to rebuke her. And her ear was quite correct in modulating these tones. She knew — and it must have been by instinct, for her culture in such matters was small — how to use her voice so that neither its tenderness nor its wrath should be misapplied. There were pieces in verse that she could read, things not wondrously good in themselves, so that she would ravish you; and she would so look at you as she did it that you would hardly dare either to avert your eyes or to return her gaze. Sir Florian had not known whether to do the one thing or the other, and had therefore seized her in his arms. Her face was oval — somewhat longer than an oval — with little in it, perhaps nothing in it, of that brilliancy of colour which we call complexion. And yet the shades of her countenance were ever changing between the softest and most transparent white and the richest, mellowest shades of brown. It was only when she simulated anger — she was almost incapable of real anger — that she would succeed in calling the thinnest streak of pink from her heart, to show that there was blood running in her veins. Her hair, which was nearly black, but in truth with more of softness and of lustre than ever belong to hair that is really black, she wore bound tight round her perfect forehead, with one long lovelock hanging over her shoulder. The form of her head was so good that she could dare to carry it without a chignon or any adventitious adjuncts from an artist's shop. Very bitter was she in consequence when speaking of the head-gear of other women. Her chin was perfect in its round — not over long, as is the case with so many such faces, utterly spoiling the symmetry of the countenance. But it lacked a

dimple, and therefore lacked feminine tenderness. Her mouth was perhaps faulty in being too small, or, at least, her lips were too thin. There was wanting from the mouth that expression of eager-speaking truthfulness which full lips will often convey. Her teeth were without flaw or blemish, even, small, white, and delicate; but perhaps they were shown too often. Her nose was small, but struck many as the prettiest feature of her face, so exquisite was the moulding of it, and so eloquent and so graceful the slight inflations of the transparent nostrils. Her eyes, in which she herself thought that the lustre of her beauty lay, were blue and clear, bright as cerulean waters. They were long, large eyes, but very dangerous. To those who knew how to read a face, there was danger plainly written in them. Poor Sir Florian had not known. But, in truth, the charm of her face did not lie in her eyes. This was felt by many even who could not read the book fluently. They were too expressive, too loud in their demands for attention, and they lacked tenderness. How few there are among women, few perhaps also among men, who know that the sweetest, softest, tenderest, truest eyes which a woman can carry in her head are green in colour. Lizzie's eyes were not tender, neither were they true. But they were surmounted by the most wonderfully pencilled eyebrows that ever nature unassisted planted on a woman's face.

We have said she was clever. We must add that she had in truth studied much. She spoke French, understood Italian, and read German. She played well on the harp, and moderately well on the piano. She sang, at least, in good taste and good tune. Of things to be learned by reading she knew much, hav-

ing really taken diligent trouble with herself. She had learned much poetry by heart, and could apply it. She forgot nothing, listened to everything, understood quickly, and was desirous to show not only as a beauty but as a wit. There were men at this time who declared that she was simply the cleverest and the handsomest woman in England. As an independent young woman she was perhaps one of the richest.

CHAPTER III.

LUCY MORRIS.

ALTHOUGH the first two chapters of this new history have been devoted to the fortunes and personal attributes of Lady Eustace, the historian begs his readers not to believe that that opulent and aristocratic Becky Sharp is to assume the dignity of heroine in the forthcoming pages. That there shall be any heroine the historian will not take upon himself to assert; but if there be a heroine, that heroine shall not be Lady Eustace. Poor Lizzie Greystock! as men double her own age, and who had known her as a forward, capricious, spoiled child in her father's lifetime, would still call her. She did so many things, made so many efforts, caused so much suffering to others, and suffered so much herself throughout the scenes with which we are about to deal, that the story can hardly be told without giving her that prominence of place which has been assigned to her in the last two chapters.

Nor does the chronicler dare to put forward Lucy Morris as a heroine. The real heroine, if it be found possible to arrange her drapery for her becomingly, and to put that part which she enacted into properly heroic words, shall stalk in among us at some considerably later period in the narrative, when the writer shall have accustomed himself to the flow of words, and

have worked himself up to a state of mind fit for the reception of noble acting and noble speaking. In the meantime, let it be understood that poor, little Lucy Morris was a governess in the house of old Lady Fawn when our beautiful young widow established herself in Mount street.

Lady Eustace and Lucy Morris had known each other for many years — had indeed been children together — there having been some old family friendship between the Greystocks and the Morrises. When the admiral's wife was living, Lucy had, as a little girl of eight or nine, been her guest. She had often been a guest at the deanery. When Lady Eustace had gone down to the bishop's palace at Bobsborough, in order that an heir to the Eustaces might be born under an auspicious roof, Lucy Morris was with the Greystocks. Lucy, who was a year younger than Lizzie, had at that time been an orphan for the last four years. She too had been left penniless, but no such brilliant future awaited her as that which Lizzie had earned for herself. There was no countess-aunt to take her into her London house. The dean and the dean's wife and the dean's daughter had been her best friends, but they were not friends on whom she could be dependent. They were in no way connected with her by blood. Therefore at the age of eighteen she had gone out to be a child's governess. Then old Lady Fawn had heard of her virtues — Lady Fawn who had seven unmarried daughters running down from seven-and-twenty to thirteen, and Lucy Morris had been hired to teach English, French, German, and something of music to the two youngest Misses Fawn.

During that visit at the deanery, when the heir of

the Eustaces was being born, Lucy was undergoing a sort of probation for the Fawn establishment. The proposed engagement with Lady Fawn was thought to be a great thing for her. Lady Fawn was known as a miracle of Virtue, Benevolence, and Persistency. Every good quality she possessed was so marked as to be worthy of being expressed with a capital. But her virtues were of that extraordinary high character that there was no weakness in them; no getting over them; no perverting them with follies, or even exaggerations. When she heard of the excellencies of Miss Morris from the dean's wife, and then, after minutest investigation, learned the exact qualities of the young lady, she expressed herself willing to take Lucy into her house on special conditions. She must be able to teach music up to a certain point.

"Then it 's all over," said Lucy to the dean with her pretty smile — that smile which caused all the old and middle-aged men to fall in love with her.

"It 's not over at all," said the dean. "You 've got four months. Our organist is about as good a teacher as there is in England. You are clever and quick, and he shall teach you."

So Lucy went to Bobsborough and was afterwards accepted by Lady Fawn.

While she was at the deanery there sprung up a renewed friendship between her and Lizzie. It was indeed chiefly a one-sided friendship; for Lucy, who was quick and unconsciously capable of reading that book to which we alluded in a previous chapter, was somewhat afraid of the rich widow. And when Lizzie talked to her of their old childish days, and quoted poetry, and spoke of things romantic — as she was much given

to do — Lucy felt that the metal did not ring true. And then Lizzie had an ugly habit of abusing all her other friends behind their backs. Now Lucy did not like to hear the Greystocks abused, and would say so. "That 's all very well, you little minx," Lizzie would say playfully, "but you know they are all asses." Lucy by no means thought that the Greystocks were asses, and was very strongly of opinion that one of them was as far removed from being an ass as any human being she had ever known. This one was Frank Greystock the barrister. Of Frank Greystock some special — but, let it be hoped, very short — description must be given by and by. For the present it will be sufficient to declare that, during that short Easter holiday which he spent at his father's house in Bobsborough, he found Lucy Morris to be a most agreeable companion.

"Remember her position," said Mrs. Dean to her son.

"Her position! Well, and what is her position, mother?"

"You know what I mean, Frank. She is as sweet a girl as ever lived, and a perfect lady. But with a governess, unless you mean to marry her, you should be more careful than with another girl, because you may do her such a world of mischief."

"I don't see that at all."

"If Lady Fawn knew that she had an admirer, Lady Fawn would not let her come into her house."

"Then Lady Fawn is an idiot. If a girl be admirable, of course she will be admired. Who can hinder it?"

"You know what I mean, Frank."

"Yes, I do; well. I don't suppose I can afford to marry Lucy Morris. At any rate, mother, I will never

say a word to raise a hope in her — if it would be a hope ——"

"Of course it would be a hope."

"I don't know that at all. But I will never say any such word to her, unless I make up my mind that I can afford to marry her."

"Oh, Frank, it would be impossible," said Mrs. Dean.

Mrs. Dean was a very good woman, but she had aspirations in the direction of filthy lucre on behalf of her children, or at least on behalf of this special child, and she did think it would be very nice if Frank would marry an heiress. This, however, was a long time ago — nearly two years ago; and many grave things had got themselves transacted since Lucy's visit to the deanery. She had become quite an old and an accustomed member of Lady Fawn's family. The youngest Fawn girl was not yet fifteen, and it was understood that Lucy was to remain with the Fawns for some quite indefinite time to come. Lady Fawn's eldest daughter, Mrs. Hittaway, had a family of her own, having been married ten or twelve years, and it was quite probable that Lucy might be transferred. Lady Fawn fully appreciated her treasure, and was, and ever had been, conscientiously anxious to make Lucy's life happy. But she thought that a governess should not be desirous of marrying, at any rate till a somewhat advanced period of life. A governess, if she were given to falling in love, could hardly perform her duties in life. No doubt, not to be a governess, but a young lady free from the embarrassing necessity of earning bread, free to have a lover and a husband, would be upon the whole nicer. So it is nicer to be

born to £10,000 a year than to have to wish for £500. Lady Fawn could talk excellent sense on this subject by the hour, and always admitted that much was due to a governess who knew her place and did her duty. She was very fond of Lucy Morris, and treated her dependent with affectionate consideration; but she did not approve of visits from Mr. Frank Greystock. Lucy, blushing up to the eyes, had once declared that she desired to have no personal visitors at Lady Fawn's house; but that, as regarded her own friendships, the matter was one for her own bosom. "Dear Miss Morris," Lady Fawn had said, "we understand each other so perfectly, and you are so good, that I am quite sure everything will be as it ought to be." Lady Fawn lived down at Richmond, all the year through, in a large old-fashioned house with a large old-fashioned garden, called Fawn Court. After that speech of hers to Lucy, Frank Greystock did not call again at Fawn Court for many months, and it is possible that her ladyship had said a word also to him. But Lady Eustace, with her pretty little pair of gray ponies, would sometimes drive down to Richmond to see her "dear little old friend" Lucy, and her visits were allowed. Lady Fawn had expressed an opinion among her daughters that she did not see any harm in Lady Eustace. She thought that she rather liked Lady Eustace. But then Lady Fawn hated Lady Linlithgow as only two old women can hate each other; and she had not heard the story of the diamond necklace.

Lucy Morris certainly was a treasure — a treasure though no heroine. She was a sweetly social, genial little human being whose presence in the house was ever felt to be like sunshine. She was never forward, but never bashful. She was always open to familiar

intercourse without ever putting herself forward. There was no man or woman with whom she would not so talk as to make the man or woman feel that the conversation was remarkably pleasant, and she could do the same with any child. She was an active, mindful, bright, energetic little thing to whom no work ever came amiss. She had catalogued the library, which had been collected by the late Lord Fawn with peculiar reference to the Christian theology of the third and fourth centuries. She had planned the new flower-garden, though Lady Fawn thought that she had done that herself. She had been invaluable during Clara Fawn's long illness. She knew every rule at croquet, and could play piquet. When the girls got up charades they had to acknowledge that everything depended on Miss Morris. They were good-natured, plain, unattractive girls, who spoke of her to her face as one who could easily do anything to which she might put her hand. Lady Fawn did really love her. Lord Fawn, the eldest son, a young man of about thirty-five, a peer of Parliament and an Under-Secretary of State, very prudent and very diligent, of whom his mother and sisters stood in great awe, consulted her frequently and made no secret of his friendship. The mother knew her awful son well, and was afraid of nothing wrong in that direction. Lord Fawn had suffered a disappointment in love, but he had consoled himself with blue books, and mastered his passion by incessant attendance at the India Board. The lady he had loved had been rich, and Lord Fawn was poor; but nevertheless he had mastered his passion. There was no fear that his feelings toward the governess would become too warm; nor was it likely that Miss Morris should encounter

danger in regard to him. It was quite an understood thing in the family that Lord Fawn must marry money.

Lucy Morris was indeed a treasure. No brighter face ever looked into another to seek sympathy there, either in mirth or woe. There was a gleam in her eyes that was almost magnetic, so sure was she to obtain by it that community of interest which she desired, though it were but for a moment. Lord Fawn was pompous, slow, dull, and careful; but even he had given way to it at once. Lady Fawn, too, was very careful, but she had owned to herself long since that she could not bear to look forward to any permanent severance. Of course Lucy would be made over to the Hittaways, whose mother lived in Warwick Square, and whose father was Chairman of the Board of Civil Appeals. The Hittaways were the only grandchildren with whom Lady Fawn had as yet been blessed, and of course Lucy must go the Hittaways.

She was but a little thing; and it cannot be said of her, as of Lady Eustace, that she was a beauty. The charm of her face consisted in the peculiar, watery brightness of her eyes, in the corners of which it would always seem that a diamond of a tear was lurking whenever any matter of excitement was afoot. Her light-brown hair was soft and smooth and pretty. As hair it was very well, but it had no specialty. Her mouth was somewhat large, but full of ever-varying expression. Her forehead was low and broad, with prominent temples, on which it was her habit to clasp tightly her little outstretched fingers, as she sat listening to you. Of listeners she was the very best, for she would always be saying a word or two, just to help you — the best word that could be spoken — and then

again she would be hanging on your lips. There are listeners who show by their mode of listening that they listen as a duty, not because they are interested. Lucy Morris was not such a one. She would take up your subject, whatever it was, and make it her own. There was forward just then a question as to whether the Sawab of Mygawb should have twenty millions of rupees paid to him and be placed upon a throne, or whether he should be kept in prison all his life. The British world generally could not be made to interest itself about the Sawab, but Lucy positively mastered the subject, and almost got Lord Fawn into a difficulty by persuading him to stand up against his chief on behalf of the injured Prince.

What else can be said of her face or personal appearance that will interest a reader? When she smiled there was the daintiest little dimple on her cheek. And when she laughed, that little nose, which was not as well-shaped a nose as it might have been, would almost change its shape and cock itself up in its mirth. Her hands were very thin and long, and so were her feet — by no means models as were those of her friend Lady Eustace. She was a little, thin, quick, graceful creature, whom it was impossible that you should see without wishing to have near you. A most unselfish little creature she was, but one who had a well-formed idea of her own identity. She was quite resolved to be somebody among her fellow-creatures — not somebody in the way of marrying a lord or a rich man, or somebody in the way of being a beauty, or somebody as a wit, but somebody as having a purpose and a use in life. She was the humblest little thing in the world in regard to any possible putting of herself forward or needful putting of

herself back; and yet, to herself, nobody was her superior. What she had was her own, whether it was the old gray silk dress which she had bought with the money she had earned, or the wit which nature had given her. And Lord Fawn's title was his own, and Lady Fawn's rank her own. She coveted no man's possessions, and no woman's; but she was minded to hold by her own. Of present advantages or disadvantages — whether she had the one or suffered from the other — she thought not at all. It was her fault that she had nothing of feminine vanity. But no man or woman was ever more anxious to be effective, to persuade, to obtain belief, sympathy, and co-operation — not for any result personal to herself, but because by obtaining these things she could be effective in the object then before her, be it what it might.

One other thing may be told of her. She had given her heart, for good and all, as she owned to herself, to Frank Greystock. She had owned to herself that it was so, and had owned to herself that nothing could come of it. Frank was becoming a man of mark, but was becoming a man of mark without much money. Of all men he was the last who could afford to marry a governess. And then, moreover, he had never said a word to make her think that he loved her. He had called on her once or twice at Fawn Court, as why should he not? Seeing that there had been friendship between the families for so many years, who could complain of that? Lady Fawn, however, had not complained; but just said a word. A word in season, how good is it? Lucy did not much regard the word spoken to herself; but when she reflected that a word must also have been

spoken to Mr. Greystock — otherwise how should it have been that he never came again — that she did not like.

In herself she regarded this passion of hers as a healthy man regards the loss of a leg or an arm. It is a great nusiance, a loss that maims the whole life, a misfortune to be much regretted. But because a leg is gone, everything is not gone. A man with a wooden leg may stump about through much action, and may enjoy the keenest pleasures of humanity. He has his eyes left to him, and his ears, and his intellect. He will not break his heart for the loss of that leg. And so it was with Lucy Morris. She would still stump about and be very active. Eyes, ears, and intellect were left to her. Looking at her position, she told herself that a happy love could hardly have been her lot in life. Lady Fawn, she thought, was right. A governess should make up her mind to do without a lover. She had given away her heart, and yet she would do without a lover. When, on one dull, dark afternoon, as she was thinking of all this, Lord Fawn suddenly put into her hands a cruelly long printed document respecting the Sawab, she went to work upon it immediately. As she read it, she could not refrain from thinking how wonderfully Frank Greystock would plead the cause of the Indian prince, if the privilege of pleading it could be given to him.

The spring had come round, with May and the London butterflies, at the time at which our story begins, and during six months Frank Greystock had not been at Fawn Court. Then one day Lady Eustace came down with her ponies, and her footman, and a new dear friend of hers, Miss Macnulty. While Miss

Macnulty was being honoured by Lady Fawn, Lizzie had retreated to a corner with her old dear friend Lucy Morris. It was pretty to see how so wealthy and fashionable a woman as Lady Eustace could show so much friendship to a governess. "Have you seen Frank lately?" said Lady Eustace, referring to her cousin the barrister.

"Not for ever so long," said Lucy with her cheeriest smile.

"He is not going to prove a false knight?" asked Lady Eustace, in her lowest whisper.

"I don't know that Mr. Greystock is much given to knighthood at all," said Lucy, "unless it is to being made Sir Francis by his party."

"Nonsense, my dear; as if I did n't know. I suppose Lady Fawn has been interfering, like an old cat as she is."

"She is not an old cat, Lizzie! and I won't hear her called so. If you think so, you should n't come here. And she has n't interfered. That is, she has done nothing that she ought not to have done."

"Then she has interfered," said Lady Eustace, as she got up and walked across the room with a sweet smile to the old cat.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANK GREYSTOCK.

Frank Greystock the barrister was the only son of the Dean of Bobsborough. Now the dean had a family of daughters — not quite so numerous indeed as that of Lady Fawn, for there were only three of them — and was by no means a rich man. Unless a dean have a private fortune, or has chanced to draw the happy lot of Durham in the lottery of deans, he can hardly be wealthy. At Bobsborough, the dean was endowed with a large, rambling, picturesque, uncomfortable house, and with £1,500 a year. In regard to personal property, it may be asserted of all the Greystocks that they never had any. They were a family of which the males would surely come to be deans and admirals, and the females would certainly find husbands. And they lived on the good things of the world, and mixed with wealthy people. But they never had any money. The Eustaces always had money and the Bishop of Bobsborough was wealthy. The dean was a man very different from his brother, the admiral, who had never paid anybody anything. The dean did pay; but he was a little slow in his payments, and money with him was never plentiful. In these circumstances it became very expedient that Frank Greystock should earn his bread early in life.

Nevertheless he had chosen a profession which is not often lucrative at first. He had been called to the

bar, and had gone, and was still going, the circuit in which lies the cathedral city of Bobsborough. Bobsborough is not much of a town, and was honoured with the judges' visits only every other circuit. Frank began pretty well; getting some little work in London, and perhaps nearly enough to pay the cost of the circuit out of the county in which the cathedral was situated. But he began life after that impecunious fashion for which the Greystocks have been noted. Tailors, robemakers, and booksellers gave him trust, and did believe that they would get their money. And any persistent tradesman did get it. He did not actually hoist the black flag of impecuniosity, and proclaim his intention of preying generally upon the retail dealers, as his uncle the admiral had done. But he became known as a young man with whom money was "tight." All this had been going on for three or four years before he had met Lucy Morris at the deanery. He was then eight-and-twenty, and had been four years called. He was thirty when old Lady Fawn hinted to him that he had better not pay any more visits at Fawn Court.

But things had much altered with him of late. At the time of that visit to the deanery he had made a sudden start in his profession. The corporation of the city of London had brought an action against the Bank of England with reference to certain alleged encroachments, of which action, considerable as it was in all its interests, no further notice need be taken here than is given by the statement that a great deal of money in this cause had found its way among the lawyers. Some of it penetrated into the pocket of Frank Greystock; but he earned more than money, better than money, out of that affair. It was attributed to him by the

attorneys that the Bank of England was saved from the necessity of reconstructing all its bullion cellars, and he had made his character for industry. In the year after that, the Bobsborough people were rather driven into a corner in search of a clever young Conservative candidate for the borough, and Frank Greystock was invited to stand. It was not thought that there was much chance of success, and the dean was against it. But Frank liked the honour and glory of the contest, and so did Frank's mother. Frank Greystock stood, and at the time in which he was warned away from Fawn Court had been nearly a year in Parliament. "Of course it does interfere with one's business," he had said to his father; "but then it brings one business also. A man with a seat in Parliament who shows that he means work will always get nearly as much work as he can do." Such was Frank's exposition to his father. It may perhaps not be found to hold water in all cases. Mrs. Dean was of course delighted with her son's success, and so were the girls. Women like to feel that the young men belonging to them are doing something in the world, so that a reflected glory may be theirs. It was pleasant to talk of Frank as member for the City. Brothers do not always care much for a brother's success, but a sister is generally sympathetic. If Frank would only marry money, there was nothing he might not achieve. That he would live to sit on the woolsack was now almost a certainty to the dear old lady. But in order that he might sit there comfortably it was necessary that he should at least abstain from marrying a poor wife. For there was fear at the deanery also in regard to Lucy Morris.

"That notion of marrying money, as you call it," Frank said to his second sister, Margaret, "is the most disgusting idea in the world."

"It is as easy to love a girl who has something as one who has nothing," said Margaret.

"No, it is not; because the girls with money are scarce, and those without it are plentiful — an argument of which I don't suppose you see the force." Then Margaret for the moment was snubbed and retired.

"Indeed, Frank, I think Lady Fawn was right," said the mother.

"And I think she was quite wrong. If there be anything in it, it won't be expelled by Lady Fawn's interference. Do you think I should allow Lady Fawn to tell me not to choose such or such a woman for my wife?"

"It's the habit of seeing her, my dear. Nobody loves Lucy Morris better than I do. We all like her. But, dear Frank, would it do for you to make her your wife?"

Frank Greystock was silent for a moment, and then he answered his mother's question. "I am not quite sure whether it would or would not. But I do think this: that if I were bold enough to marry now, and to trust all to the future, and could get Lucy to be my wife, I should be doing a great thing. I doubt, however, whether I have the courage." All of which made the dean's wife uneasy.

The reader who has read so far will perhaps think that Frank Greystock was in love with Lucy as Lucy was in love with him. But such was not exactly the case. To be in love as an absolute, well-marked,

acknowledged fact, is the condition of a woman more frequently and more readily than of a man. Such is not the common theory on the matter, as it is the man's business to speak, and the woman's business to be reticent. And the woman is presumed to have kept her heart free from any load of love till she may accept the burden with an assurance that it shall become a joy and a comfort to her. But such presumptions, though they may be very useful for the regulation of conduct, may not always be true. It comes more within the scope of a woman's mind than of a man's to think closely and decide sharply on such a matter. With a man it is often chance that settles the question for him. He resolves to propose to a woman, or proposes without resolving, because she is close to him. Frank Greystock ridiculed the idea of Lady Fawn's interference in so high a matter as his love — or abstinence from love. Nevertheless, had he been made a welcome guest at Fawn Court, he would undoubtedly have told his love to Lucy Morris. He was not a welcome guest, but had been banished; and, as a consequence of that banishment, he had formed no resolution in regard to Lucy, and did not absolutely know whether she was necessary to him or not. But Lucy Morris knew all about it.

Moreover, it frequently happens with men that they fail to analyse these things, and do not make out for themselves any clear definition of what their feelings are or what they mean. We hear that a man has behaved badly to a girl, when the behaviour of which he has been guilty has resulted simply from want of thought. He has found a certain companionship to be agreeable to him, and he has accepted the pleasure

without inquiry. Some vague idea has floated across his brain that the world is wrong in supposing that such friendship cannot exist without marriage or question of marriage. It is simply friendship. And yet were his friend to tell him that she intended to give herself in marriage elsewhere he would suffer all the pangs of jealousy, and would imagine himself to be horribly ill-treated. To have such a friend — a friend whom he cannot or will not make his wife — is no injury to him. To him it is simply a delight, an excitement in life, a thing to be known to himself only and not talked of to others, a source of pride and inward exultation. It is a joy to think of when he wakes, and a consolation in his little troubles. It dispels the weariness of life, and makes a green spot of holiday within his daily work. It is indeed death to her; but he does not know it. Frank Greystock did think that he could not marry Lucy Morris without making an imprudent plunge into deep water, and yet he felt that Lady Fawn was an ill-natured old woman for hinting to him that he had better not, for the present, continue his visits to Fawn Court. "Of course you understand me, Mr. Greystock," she had said, meaning to be civil. "When Miss Morris has left us — should she ever leave us — I should be most happy to see you." "What on earth would take me to Fawn Court if Lucy were not there?" he said to himself, not choosing to appreciate Lady Fawn's civility.

Frank Greystock was at this time nearly thirty years old. He was a good-looking, but not a strikingly handsome man, thin, of moderate height, with sharp, gray eyes; a face clean shorn, with the exception of a small whisker; with wiry, strong dark hair, which was already

beginning to show a tinge of gray — the very opposite in appearance to his late friend, Sir Florian Eustace. He was quick, ready-witted, self-reliant, and not over scrupulous in the outward things of the world. He was desirous of doing his duty to others, but he was specially desirous that others should do their duty to him. He intended to get on in the world, and believed that happiness was to be achieved by success. He was certainly made for the profession which he had adopted. His father, looking to certain morsels of Church patronage which occasionally came in his way, and to the fact that he and the bishop were on most friendly terms, had wished his son to take orders. But Frank had known himself and his own qualities too well to follow his father's advice. He had chosen to be a barrister, and now at thirty was in Parliament.

He had been asked to stand for Bobsborough in the Conservative interest, and as a Conservative he had been returned. Those who invited him knew probably but little of his own political beliefs or feelings — did not, probably, know that he had any. His father was a fine old Tory of the ancient school, who thought things were going from bad to worse, but was able to live happily in spite of his anticipations. The dean was one of those Old-World politicians — we meet them every day, and they are generally very pleasant people — who enjoy the politics of the side to which they belong without any special belief in them. If pressed hard, they will almost own that their so-called convictions are prejudices. But not for worlds would they be rid of them. When two or three of them meet together, they are as free-masons, who are bound by a pleasant bond which separates them from the outer world.

They feel among themselves that everything that is being done is bad, even though that everything is done by their own party. It was bad to interfere with Charles, bad to endure Cromwell, bad to banish James, bad to put up with William. The House of Hanover was bad. All interference with prerogative has been bad. The Reform bill was very bad. Encroachment on the estates of the bishops was bad. Emancipation of Roman Catholics was the worst of all. Abolition of corn-laws, church-rates, and oaths and tests were all bad. The meddling with the Universities has been grievous. The treatment of the Irish Church has been Satanic. The overhauling of schools is most injurious to English education. Education bills and Irish land bills were all bad. Every step taken has been bad. And yet to them old England is of all countries in the world the best to live in, and is not at all the less comfortable because of the changes that have been made. These people are ready to grumble at every boon conferred on them, and yet to enjoy every boon. They know, too, their privileges, and, after a fashion, understand their position. It is picturesque, and it pleases them. To have been always in the right and yet always on the losing side; always being ruined, always under persecution from a wild spirit of republican-demagogism, and yet never to lose anything, not even position or public esteem, is pleasant enough. A huge, living, daily increasing grievance that does one no palpable harm is the happiest possession that a man can have. There is a large body of such men in England, and, personally, they are the very salt of the nation. He who said that all Conservatives are stupid did not know them. Stupid

Conservatives there may be — and there certainly are very stupid Radicals. The well-educated, widely-read Conservative, who is well assured that all good things are gradually being brought to an end by the voice of the people, is generally the pleasantest man to be met. But he is a Buddhist, possessing a religious creed which is altogether dark and mysterious to the outer world. Those who watch the ways of the advanced Buddhist hardly know whether the man does believe himself in his hidden god, but men perceive that he is respectable, self-satisfied, and a man of note. It is of course from the society of such that conservative candidates are to be sought; but, alas, it is hard to indoctrinate young minds with the old belief since new theories of life have become so rife!

Nevertheless Frank Greystock, when he was invited to stand for Bobsborough in the Conservative interest, had not for a moment allowed any political heterodoxy on his own part to stand in the way of his advancement. It may, perhaps, be the case that a barrister is less likely to be influenced by personal convictions in taking his side in politics than any other man who devotes himself to public affairs. No slur on the profession is intended by this suggestion. A busy, clever, useful man, who has been at work all his life, finds that his own progress toward success demands from him that he shall become a politician. The highest work of a lawyer can only be reached through political struggle. As a large-minded man of the world, peculiarly conversant with the fact that every question has two sides, and that as much may often be said on one side as on the other, he

has probably not become violent in his feelings as a political partisan. Thus he sees that there is an opening here or an opening there, and the offence in either case is not great to him. With Frank Greystock the matter was very easy. There certainly was no apostasy. He had now and again attacked his father's ultra Toryism, and rebuked his mother and sisters when they spoke of Gladstone as Apollyon, and called John Bright the Abomination of Desolation. But it was easy for him to fancy himself a Conservative, and as such he took his seat in the House without any feeling of discomfort.

During the first four months of his first session he had not spoken, but he had made himself useful. He had sat on one or two committees, though as a barrister he might have excused himself, and had done his best to learn the forms of the House. But he had already begun to find that the time which he devoted to Parliament was much wanted for his profession. Money was very necessary to him. Then a new idea was presented to him.

John Eustace and Greystock were very intimate, as also had been Sir Florian and Greystock. "I tell you what I wish you'd do, Greystock," Eustace said to him one day, as they were standing idle together in the lobby of the House. For John Eustace was also in Parliament.

"Anything to oblige you, my friend."

"It's only a trifle," said Eustace. "Just to marry your cousin, my brother's widow."

"By Jove, I wish I had the chance!"

"I don't see why you should n't. She is sure to marry somebody, and at her age so she ought. She's

not twenty-three yet. We could trust you — with the child and all the rest of it. As it is, she is giving us a deal of trouble."

"But, my dear fellow ——"

"I know she 's fond of you. You were dining there last Sunday."

"And so was Fawn. Lord Fawn is the man to marry Lizzie. You see if he does n't. He was uncommonly sweet on her the other night, and really interested her about the Sawab."

"She 'll never be Lady Fawn," said John Eustace. "And to tell the truth, I should n't care to have to deal with Lord Fawn. He would be infinitely troublesome; and I can hardly wash my hands of her affairs. She 's worth nearly £5,000 a year as long as she lives, and I really don't think that she 's much amiss."

"Much amiss! I don't know whether she 's not the prettiest woman I ever saw," said Greystock.

"Yes; but I mean in conduct, and all that. She is making herself queer; and Camperdown, our lawyer, means to jump upon her; but it 's only because she does n't know what she ought to be at, and what she ought not. You could tell her."

"It would n't suit me at all to have to quarrel with Camperdown," said the barrister, laughing.

"You and he would settle everything in five minutes, and it would save me a world of trouble," said Eustace.

"Fawn is your man; take my word for it," said Greystock, as he walked back into the House.

. . . . . .

Dramatists, when they write their plays, have a delightful privilege of prefixing a list of their personages; and the dramatists of old used to tell us who was in

love with whom, and what were the blood relationships of all the persons. In such a narrative as this, any proceeding of that kind would be unusual, and therefore the poor narrator has been driven to expend his four first chapters in the mere task of introducing his characters. He regrets the length of these introductions, and will now begin at once the action of his story.

CHAPTER V.

THE EUSTACE NECKLACE.

John Eustace, Lady Eustace's brother-in-law, had told his friend Greystock, the lady's cousin, that Mr. Camperdown the lawyer intended to "jump upon" that lady. Making such allowance and deduction from the force of these words as the slang expression requires, we may say that John Eustace was right. Mr. Camperdown was in earnest, and did intend to obtain the restoration of those jewels. Mr. Camperdown was a gentleman of about sixty, who had been lawyer to Sir Florian's father, and whose father had been lawyer to Sir Florian's grandfather. His connection with the property and with the family was of a nature to allow him to take almost any liberty with the Eustaces. When therefore John Eustace, in regard to those diamonds, had pleaded that the heir in his long minority would obtain ample means of buying more diamonds, and of suggesting that the plunder for the sake of tranquillity should be allowed, Mr. Camperdown took upon himself to say that he 'd "be —— if he 'd put up with it."

"I really don't know what you are to do," said John Eustace.

"I 'll file a bill in Chancery, if it 's necessary," said the old lawyer. "Heaven on earth! as trustee how are you to reconcile yourself to such a robbery? They

represent £500 a year forever, and she is to have them simply because she chooses to take them!"

"I suppose Florian could have given them away. At any rate, he could have sold them."

"I don't know that," said Mr. Camperdown. "I have not looked as yet, but I think that this necklace has been made an heirloom. At any rate, it represents an amount of property that should n't and could n't be made over legally without some visible evidence of transfer. It 's as clear a case of stealing as I ever knew in my life, and as bad a case. She had n't a farthing, and she has got the whole of the Ayrshire property for her life. She goes about and tells everybody that it 's hers to sell to-morrow if she pleases to sell it. No, John," — Mr. Camperdown had known Eustace when he was a boy, and had watched him become a man, and had n't yet learned to drop the name by which he had called the boy, — "we must n't allow it. What do you think of her applying to me for an income to support her child, a baby not yet two years old?" Mr. Camperdown had been very adverse to all the circumstances of Sir Florian's marriage, and had subjected himself to Sir Florian's displeasure for expressing his opinion. He had tried to explain that as the lady brought no money into the family she was not entitled to such a jointure as Sir Florian was determined to lavish upon her. But Sir Florian had been obstinate, both in regard to the settlement and the will. It was not till after Sir Florian's death that this terrible matter of the jewels had even suggested itself to Mr. Camperdown. The jewellers in whose custody the things had been since the death of the late Lady Eustace had mentioned the affair to him immediately on the young widow's return

from Naples. Sir Florian had withdrawn, not all the jewels, but by far the most valuable of them, from the jewellers' care on his return to London from their marriage tour to Scotland, and this was the result. The jewellers were at that time without any doubt as to the date at which the necklace was taken from them.

Mr. Camperdown's first attempt was made by a most courteous and even complimentary note, in which he suggested to Lady Eustace that it would be for the advantage of all parties that the family jewels should be kept together. Lizzie, as she read this note, smiled, and said to herself that she did not exactly see how her own interests would be best served by such an arrangement. She made no answer to Mr. Camperdown's note. Some months after this, when the heir was born, and as Lady Eustace was passing through London on her journey from Bobsborough to Portray, a meeting had been arranged between her and Mr. Camperdown. She had endeavoured by all the wiles she knew to avoid this meeting, but it had been forced upon her. She had been almost given to understand that unless she submitted to it, she would not be able to draw her income from the Portray property. Messrs. Mowbray & Mopus had advised her to submit. "My husband gave me a necklace, and they want me to give it back," she had said to Mr. Mopus. "Do nothing of the kind," Mr. Mopus had replied. "If you find it necessary, refer Mr. Camperdown to us. We will answer him." The interview had taken place, during which Mr. Camperdown took the trouble to explain very plainly and more than once that the income from the Portray property belonged to Lady Eustace for her life

only. It would after her death be rejoined, of necessity, to the rest of the Eustace property. This was repeated to Lady Eustace in the presence of John Eustace; but she made no remark on being so informed. "You understand the nature of the settlement, Lady Eustace?" Mr. Camperdown had said. "I believe I understand everything," she replied. Then, just at the close of the interview, he asked a question about the jewels. Lady Eustace at first made no reply. "They might as well be sent back to Messrs. Garnett," said Mr. Camperdown. "I don't know that I have any to send back," she answered; and then she escaped before Mr. Camperdown was able to arrange any further attack. "I can manage with her better by letter than I can personally," he said to John Eustace.

Lawyers such as Mr. Camperdown are slow, and it was three or four months after that when he wrote a letter in his own name to Lady Eustace, explaining to her, still courteously, that it was his business to see that the property of the Eustace family was placed in fit hands, and that a certain valuable necklace of diamonds, which was an heirloom of the family, and which was undeniably the property of the heir, was believed to be in her custody. As such property was peculiarly subject to risks, would she have the kindness to make arrangements for handing over the necklace to the custody of the Messrs. Garnett? To this letter Lizzie made no answer whatever, nor did she to a second note, calling attention to the first. When John Eustace told Greystock that Camperdown intended to "jump upon" Lady Eustace, the following further letter had been written by the firm, but up to that time Lizzie had not replied to it: —

"62 New Square, Lincoln's Inn,
"5 May, 186—.

"Madam: It is our duty as attorneys acting on behalf of the estate of your late husband, Sir Florian Eustace, and in the interest of your son, his heir, to ask for restitution of a certain valuable diamond necklace which is believed to be now in the possession of your ladyship. Our senior partner, Mr. Camperdown, has written to your ladyship more than once on the subject, but has not been honoured with any reply. Doubtless had there been any mistake as to the necklace being in your hands we would have been so informed. The diamonds were withdrawn from Messrs. Garnett, the jewellers, by Sir Florian soon after his marriage, and were, no doubt, intrusted to your keeping. They are appanages of the family which should not be in your hands as the widow of the late baronet, and they constitute an amount of property which certainly cannot be alienated from the family without inquiry or right, as might any trifling article either of use or ornament. The jewels are valued at over £10,000.

"We are reluctantly compelled, by the fact of your having left unanswered three letters from Mr. Camperdown, Senior, on the subject, to explain to you that if atttention be not paid to this letter, we shall be obliged, in the performance of our duty, to take legal steps for the restitution of the property.

"We have the honour to be, Madam,
"Your ladyship's most obedient servants,
"Camperdown & Son.

"To Lady Eustace," etc., etc.

A few days after it was sent, old Mr. Camperdown got the letter-book of the office and read the letter to John Eustace.

"I don't see how you 're to get them," said Eustace.

"We 'll throw upon her the burden of showing that they have become legally her property. She can't do it."

"Suppose she sold them?"

"We 'll follow them up. Ten thousand pounds, my dear John! God bless my soul! it 's a magnificent dowry for a daughter — an ample provision for a younger son. And she is to be allowed to filch it, as other widows filch china cups and a silver teaspoon or two! It 's quite a common thing, but I never heard of such a haul as this."

"It will be very unpleasant," said Eustace.

"And then she still goes about everywhere declaring that the Portray property is her own. She 's a bad lot. I knew it from the first. Of course we shall have trouble." Then Mr. Eustace explained to the lawyer that their best way out of it all would be to get the widow married to some respectable husband. She was sure to marry sooner or later, so John Eustace said, and any "decently decent" fellow would be easier to deal with than she herself. "He must be very indecently indecent if he is not," said Mr. Camperdown. But Mr. Eustace did not name Frank Greystock the barrister as the probable future decent husband.

When Lizzie first got the letter, which she did on the day after the visit at Fawn Court of which mention has been made, she put it by unread for a couple of days. She opened it, not knowing the clerk's handwriting, but read only the first line and the signature.

For two days she went on with the ordinary affairs and amusements of her life, as though no such letter had reached her; but she was thinking of it all the time. The diamonds were in her possession, and she had had them valued by her old friend Mr. Benjamin, of the firm of Harter & Benjamin. Mr. Benjamin had suggested that stones of such a value should not be left to the risk of an ordinary London house; but Lizzie had felt that if Mr. Benjamin got them into his hands, Mr. Benjamin might perhaps not return them. Messrs. Camperdown and Garnett between them might form a league with Mr. Benjamin. Where would she be, should Mr. Benjamin tell her that under some legal sanction he had given the jewels up to Mr. Camperdown? She hinted to Mr. Benjamin that she would perhaps sell them if she got a good offer. Mr. Benjamin, who was very familiar with her, hinted that there might be a little family difficulty. "Oh, none in the least," said Lizzie; "but I don't think I shall part with them." Then she gave Mr. Benjamin an order for a strong box, which was supplied to her. The strong box, which was so heavy that she could barely lift it herself, was now in her London bedroom.

On the morning of the third day she read the letter. Miss Macnulty was staying with her, but she had not said a word to Miss Macnulty about the letter. She read it up in her own bedroom and then sat down to think about it. Sir Florian, as he had handed to her the stones for the purpose of a special dinner party which had been given to them when passing through London, had told her that they were family jewels. "That setting was done for my mother," he said, "but it is already old. When we are at home again they shall be

reset." Then he had added some little husband's joke as to a future daughter-in-law who should wear them. Nevertheless she was not sure whether the fact of their being so handed to her did not make them her own. She had spoken a second time to Mr. Mopus, and Mr. Mopus had asked her whether there existed any family deed as to the diamonds. She had heard of no such deed, nor did Mr. Camperdown mention such a deed. After reading the letter once she read it a dozen times; and then, like a woman, made up her mind that her safest course would be not to answer it.

But yet she felt sure that something unpleasant would come of it. Mr. Camperdown was not a man to take up such a question and let it drop. Legal steps! What did legal steps mean, and what could they do to her? Would Mr. Camperdown be able to put her in prison, or to take away from her the estate of Portray? She could swear that her husband had given them to her, and could invent any form of words she pleased as accompanying the gift. No one else had been near them then. But she was, and felt herself to be absolutely, alarmingly ignorant, not only of the laws but of custom in such matters. Messrs. Mowbray & Mopus and Mr. Benjamin were the allies to whom she looked for guidance; but she was wise enough to know that Mowbray & Mopus and Harter & Benjamin were not trustworthy, whereas Camperdown & Son and the Messrs. Garnett were all as firm as rocks and as respectable as the Bank of England. Circumstances — unfortunate circumstances — drove her to Harter & Benjamin and to Mowbray & Mopus, while she would have taken so much delight in feeling the strong honesty of the other people to be on her side!

She would have talked to her friends about Mr. Camperdown and the people at Garnetts' with so much satisfaction! But ease, security, and even respectability may be bought too dearly. Ten thousand pounds! Was she prepared to surrender such a sum as that? She had, indeed, already realised the fact that it might be very difficult to touch the money. When she had suggested to Mr. Benjamin that he should buy the jewels, that worthy tradesman had by no means jumped at the offer. Of what use to her would be a necklace always locked up in an iron box, which box, for aught she knew, myrmidons from Mr. Camperdown might carry off during her absence from the house? Would it not be better to come to terms and surrender? But then what should the terms be?

If only there had been a friend whom she could consult — a friend whom she could consult on a really friendly footing! — not a simply respectable, off-handed, high-minded friend, who would advise her as a matter of course to make restitution. Her uncle the dean, or her cousin Frank, or old Lady Fawn, would be sure to give her such advice as that. There are people who are so very high-minded when they have to deal with the interests of their friends! What if she were to ask Lord Fawn?

Thoughts of a second marriage had, of course, crossed Lady Eustace's mind, and they were by no means the worst thoughts that found a place there. She had a grand idea — this selfish, hard-fisted little woman, who could not bring herself to abandon the plunder on which she had laid her hand — a grand idea of surrendering herself and all her possessions to a great passion. For Florian Eustace she had never

cared. She had sat down by his side, and looked into his handsome face, and read poetry to him, because of his wealth, and because it had been indispensable to her to settle herself well. And he had been all very well — a generous, open-hearted, chivalrous, irascible, but rather heavy-minded gentleman; but she had never been in love with him. Now she desired to be so in love that she could surrender everything to her love. There was as yet nothing of such love in her bosom. She had seen no one who had so touched her. But she was alive to the romance of the thing, and was in love with the idea of being in love. "Ah," she would say to herself in her moments of solitude, "if I had a Corsair of my own, how I would sit on watch for my lover's boat by the sea-shore!" And she believed it of herself that she could do so.

But it would also be very nice to be a peeress — so that she might, without any doubt, be one of the great ladies of London. As a baronet's widow with a large income, she was already almost a great lady; but she was quite alive to a suspicion that she was not altogether strong in her position. The bishop's people and the dean's people did not quite trust her. The Camperdowns and Garnetts utterly distrusted her. The Mopuses and Benjamins were more familiar than they would be with a really great lady. She was sharp enough to understand all this. Should it be Lord Fawn or should it be a Corsair? The worst of Lord Fawn was the undoubted fact that he was not himself a great man. He could, no doubt, make his wife a peeress; but he was poor, encumbered with a host of sisters, dull as a blue-book, and possessed of little beyond his peerage to recommend him. If she could

only find a peer, unmarried, with a dash of the Corsair about him! In the mean time what was she to do about the jewels?

There was staying with her at this time a certain Miss Macnulty, who was related, after some distant fashion, to old Lady Linlithgow, and who was as utterly destitute of possessions or means of existence as any unfortunate, well-born, and moderately-educated middle-aged woman in London. To live upon her friends, such as they might be, was the only mode of life within her reach. It was not that she had chosen such dependence; nor, indeed, had she endeavoured to reject it. It had come to her as a matter of course — either that or the poorhouse. As to earning her bread, except by that attendance which a poor friend gives, the idea of any possibility that way had never entered her head. She could do nothing — except dress like a lady with the smallest possible cost, and endeavour to be obliging. Now, at this moment, her condition was terribly precarious. She had quarrelled with Lady Linlithgow, and had been taken in by her old friend Lizzie — her old enemy might, perhaps, be a truer expression — because of that quarrel. But a permanent home had not even been promised to her; and poor Miss Macnulty was aware that even a permanent home with Lady Eustace would not be an unmixed blessing. In her way, Miss Macnulty was an honest woman.

They were sitting together one May afternoon in the little back drawing-room in Mount street. They had dined early, were now drinking tea, and intended to go to the opera. It was six o'clock, and was still broad day, but the thick coloured blind was kept

across the single window, and the folding doors of the room were nearly closed, and there was a feeling of evening in the room. The necklace during the whole day had been so heavy on Lizzie's heart that she had been unable to apply her thoughts to the building of that castle in the air in which the Corsair was to reign supreme, but not alone. "My dear," she said — she generally called Miss Macnulty my dear — "you know that box I had made by the jewellers."

"You mean the safe."

"Well — yes; only it is n't a safe. A safe is a great big thing. I had it made especially for the diamonds Sir Florian gave me."

"I supposed it was so."

"I wonder whether there 's any danger about it?"

"If I were you, Lady Eustace, I would n't keep them in the house. I should have them kept where Sir Florian kept them. Suppose anybody should come and murder you."

"I 'm not a bit afraid of that," said Lizzie.

"I should be. And what will you do with it when you go to Scotland?"

"I took them with me before — in my own care. I know that was n't safe. I wish I knew what to do with them."

"There are people who keep such things," said Miss Macnulty.

Then Lizzie paused a moment. She was dying for counsel and for confidence. "I cannot trust them anywhere," she said. "It is just possible there may be a lawsuit about them."

"How a lawsuit?"

"I cannot explain it all, but I am very unhappy about it. They want me to give them up; but my

husband gave them to me, and for his sake I will not do so. When he threw them around my neck he told me that they were my own — so he did. How can a woman give up such a present — from a husband — who is dead? As to the value, I care nothing. But I won't do it." By this time Lady Eustace was in tears, and had so far succeeded as to have produced some amount of belief in Miss Macnulty's mind.

"If they are your own, they can't take them from you," said Miss Macnulty.

"They shan't. They shall find that I 've got some spirit left." Then she reflected that a real Corsair lover would protect her jewels for her — would guard them against a score of Camperdowns. But she doubted whether Lord Fawn would do much in that way. Then the door was opened, and Lord Fawn was announced. It was not at all unusual with Lord Fawn to call on the widow at this hour. Mount street is not exactly in the way from the India Office to the House of Lords; but a Hansom cab can make it almost in the way. Of neglect of official duty Lord Fawn was never guilty; but a half hour for private business or for relaxation between one stage of duty and another — can any Minister grudge so much to an indefatigable follower? Lady Eustace had been in tears as he was announced, but the light of the room was so low that the traces of them could hardly be seen. She was in her Corsair state of mind, divided between her jewels and her poetry, and caring not very much for the increased rank which Lord Fawn could give her. "The Sawab's case is coming on in the House of Commons this very night," he said, in answer to a question from Miss Macnulty. Then he turned to Lady Eustace.

"Your cousin, Mr. Greystock, is going to ask a question in the House."

"Shall you be there to answer him?" asked Miss Macnulty innocently.

"Oh dear, no. But I shall be present. A peer can go, you know." Then Lord Fawn, at considerable length, explained to the two ladies the nature and condition of the British Parliament. Miss Macnulty experienced an innocent pleasure in having such things told to her by a lord. Lady Eustace knew that this was the way in which Lord Fawn made love, and thought that from him it was as good as any other way. If she were to marry a second time simply with a view of being a peeress, of having a respected husband, and making good her footing in the world, she would as lief listen to parliamentary details and the prospects of the Sawab as to any other matters. She knew very well that no Corsair propensities would be forthcoming from Lord Fawn. Lord Fawn had just worked himself round to the Sawab again, when Frank Greystock entered the room. "Now we have both the Houses represented," said Lady Eustace, as she welcomed her cousin.

"You intend to ask your question about the Sawab to-night?" asked Lord Fawn with intense interest, feeling that had it been his lot to perform that task before he went to his couch, he would at this moment have been preparing his little speech.

But Frank Greystock had not come to his cousin's house to talk of the Prince of the Mygawb territory. When his friend Eustace had suggested to him that he should marry the widow, he had ridiculed the idea. But nevertheless he had thought of it a good deal.

He was struggling hard, working diligently, making for himself a character in Parliament, succeeding — so said all his friends — as a barrister. He was a rising young man, one of those whose names began to be much in the mouths of other men; but still he was poor. It seemed to himself that among other good gifts that of economy had not been bestowed upon him. He owed a little money, and though he owed it, he went on spending his earnings. He wanted just such a lift in the world as a wife with an income would give him. As for looking about for a girl whom he could honestly love, and who should have a fortune of her own, as well as beauty, birth, and all the other things — that was out of his reach. If he talked to himself of love, if he were ever to acknowledge to himself that love was to have sway over him, then must Lucy Morris be the mistress of his heart. He had come to know enough about himself to be aware of that; but he knew also that he had said nothing binding him to walk in that path. It was quite open to him to indulge a discreet ambition without dishonour. Therefore he also had come to call upon the beautiful widow. The courtship with her he knew need not be long. He could ask her to marry him to-morrow — as for that matter, to-day — without a feeling of hesitation. She might accept him, or might reject him; but, as he said to himself, in neither case would any harm be done.

An idea of the same kind flitted across Lizzie's mind as she sat and talked to the two gentlemen. She knew that her cousin Frank was poor, but she thought that she could fall in love with him. He was not exactly a Corsair, but he was a man who had certain Corsair propensities. He was bold and dashing, unscrupulous and

clever — a man to make a name for himself, and one to whom a woman could endure to be obedient. There could be no question as to choice between him and Lord Fawn if she were to allow herself to choose by liking. And she thought that Frank Greystock would keep the necklace, if he himself were made to have an interest in the necklace; whereas Lord Fawn would undoubtedly surrender it at once to Mr. Camperdown.

Lord Fawn had some slight idea of waiting to see the cousin go; but as Greystock had a similar idea, and as he was the stronger of the two, of course Lord Fawn went. He perhaps remembered that the Hansom cab was at the door, costing sixpence every fifteen minutes, and that he wished to show himself in the House of Lords before the peers rose. Miss Macnulty also left the room, and Frank was alone with the widow.

"Lizzie," said he, "you must be very solitary here."

"I am solitary."

"And hardly happy."

"Anything but happy, Frank. I have things that make me very unhappy; one thing that I will tell you if you will let me."

Frank had almost made up his mind to ask her on the spot to give him permission to console all her sorrows when there came a clattering double knock at the door.

"They know I shall be at home to nobody else now," said Lady Eustace.

But Frank Greystock had hardly regained his self-possession when Miss Macnulty hurried into the room, and, with a look almost of horror, declared that Lady Linlithgow was in the parlour.

CHAPTER VI.

LADY LINLITHGOW'S MISSION.

"LADY LINLITHGOW," said Frank Greystock, holding up both his hands.

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Macnulty. "I did not speak to her, but I saw her. She has sent her —— love to Lady Eustace, and begs that she will see her."

Lady Eustace had been so surprised by the announcement that hitherto she had not spoken a word. The quarrel between her and her aunt had been of such a nature that it had seemed to be impossible that the old countess should come to Mount street. Lizzie had certainly behaved very badly to her aunt — about as badly as a young woman could behave to an old woman. She had accepted bread, and shelter, and the very clothes on her back from her aunt's bounty, and had rejected even the hand of her benefactress the first moment that she had bread, and shelter, and clothes of her own. And here was Lady Linlithgow downstairs in the parlour, and sending up her love to her niece! "I won't see her," said Lizzie.

"You had better see her," said Frank.

"I can't see her," said Lizzie. "Good gracious, my dear, what has she come for?"

"She says it 's very important," said Miss Macnulty.

"Of course you must see her," said Frank. "Let me get out of the house, and then tell the servant to

show her up at once. Don't be weak now, Lizzie, and I 'll come and find out all about it to-morrow."

"Mind you do," said Lizzie. Then Frank took his departure, and Lizzie did as she was bidden. "You remain in here, Julia," she said, "so as to be near if I want you. She shall come into the front room." Then, absolutely shaking with fear of the approaching evil, she took her seat in the largest drawing-room. There was still a little delay. Time was given to Frank Greystock to get away, and to do so without meeting Lady Linlithgow in the passage. The message was conveyed by Miss Macnulty to the servant, and the same servant opened the front door for Frank before he delivered it. Lady Linlithgow, too, though very strong, was old. She was slow, or perhaps it might more properly be said she was stately in her movements. She was one of those old women who are undoubtedly old women — who in the remembrance of younger people seem always to have been old women — but on whom old age appears to have no debilitating effects. If the hand of Lady Linlithgow ever trembled, it trembled from anger. If her foot ever faltered, it faltered for effect. In her way Lady Linlithgow was a very powerful human being. She knew nothing of fear, nothing of charity, nothing of mercy, and nothing of the softness of love. She had no imagination. She was worldly, covetous, and not unfrequently cruel. But she meant to be true and honest, though she often failed in her meaning, and she had an idea of her duty in life. She was not self-indulgent. She was as hard as an oak post, but then she was also as trustworthy. No human being liked her; but she had the good word of a great many human beings. At great cost to her own comfort, she had

endeavoured to do her duty to her niece, Lizzie Greystock, when Lizzie was homeless. Undoubtedly Lizzie's bed, while it had been spread under her aunt's roof, had not been one of roses; but such as it had been, she had endured to occupy it while it served her needs. She had constrained herself to bear her aunt; but from the moment of her escape she had chosen to reject her aunt altogether. Now her aunt's heavy step was heard upon the stairs! Lizzie also was a brave woman after a certain fashion. She could dare to incur a great danger for an adequate object. But she was too young as yet to have become mistress of that persistent courage which was Lady Linlithgow's peculiar possession.

When the countess entered the drawing-room Lizzie rose upon her legs, but did not come forward from her chair. The old woman was not tall; but her face was long, and at the same time large, square at the chin and square at the forehead, and gave her almost an appearance of height. Her nose was very prominent, not beaked, but straight and strong, and broad at the bridge, and of a dark-red colour. Her eyes were sharp and gray. Her mouth was large, and over it there was almost beard enough for a young man's moustache. Her chin was firm, and large, and solid. Her hair was still brown, and was only just grizzled in parts. Nothing becomes an old woman like gray hair, but Lady Linlithgow's hair would never be gray. Her appearance, on the whole, was not prepossessing, but it gave one an idea of honest, real strength. What one saw was not buckram, whalebone, paint, and false hair. It was all human — hardly feminine, certainly not angelic, with perhaps a hint in the other direction — but a human body, and not a thing of pads and patches. Lizzie, as

she saw her aunt, made up her mind for the combat. Who is there that has lived to be a man or woman, and has not experienced a moment in which a combat has impended, and a call for such sudden courage has been necessary? Alas! sometimes the combat comes, and the courage is not there. Lady Eustace was not at her ease as she saw her aunt enter the room. "Oh, come ye in peace, or come ye in war?" she would have said had she dared. Her aunt had sent up her love, if the message had been delivered aright; but what of love could there be between those two? The countess dashed at once to the matter in hand, making no allusion to Lizzie's ungrateful conduct to herself. "Lizzie," she said, "I've been asked to come to you by Mr. Camperdown. I'll sit down, if you please."

"Oh, certainly, Aunt Penelope. Mr. Camperdown!"

"Yes; Mr. Camperdown. You know who he is. He has been to me because I am your nearest relation. So I am, and therefore I have come. I don't like it, I can tell you."

"As for that, Aunt Penelope, you've done it to please yourself," said Lizzie in a tone of insolence with which Lady Linlithgow had been familiar in former days.

"No, I haven't, Miss. I haven't come for my own pleasure at all. I have come for the credit of the family, if any good can be done towards saving it. You've got your husband's diamonds locked up somewhere, and you must give them back."

"My husband's diamonds were my diamonds," said Lizzie stoutly.

"They were family diamonds, Eustace diamonds, heirlooms — old property belonging to the Eustaces,

just like their estates. Sir Florian did n't give 'em away, and could n't, and would n't if he could. Such things ain't given away in that fashion. It 's all nonsense, and you must give them up."

"Who says so?"

"I say so."

"That 's nothing, Aunt Penelope."

"Nothing, is it? You 'll see. Mr. Camperdown says so. All the world will say so. If you don't take care, you 'll find yourself brought into a court of law, my dear, and a jury will say so. That 's what it will come to. What good will they do you? You can't sell them; and, as a widow, you can't wear 'em. If you marry again, you would n't disgrace your husband by going about showing off the Eustace diamonds. But you don't know anything about 'proper feelings.'"

"I know every bit as much as you do, Aunt Penelope, and I don't want you to teach me."

"Will you give up the jewels to Mr. Camperdown?"

"No, I won't."

"Or to the jewellers?"

"No, I won't. I mean to — keep them — for — my child." Then there came forth a sob and a tear, and Lizzie's handkerchief was held to her eyes.

"Your child! Would n't they be kept properly for him, and for the family, if the jewellers had them? I don't believe you care about your child."

"Aunt Penelope, you had better take care."

"I shall say just what I think, Lizzie. You can't frighten me. The fact is, you are disgracing the family you have married into, and as you are my niece ——"

"I 'm not disgracing anybody. You are disgracing everybody."

"As you are my niece, I have undertaken to come to you and to tell you that if you don't give 'em up within a week from this time they 'll proceed against you for — stealing 'em." Lady Linlithgow, as she uttered this terrible threat, bobbed her head at her niece in a manner calculated to add very much to the force of her words. The words, and tone, and gesture combined were, in truth, awful.

"I did n't steal them. My husband gave them to me with his own hands."

"You would n't answer Mr. Camperdown's letters, you know. That alone will condemn you. After that there is n't a word to be said about it — not a word. Mr. Camperdown is the family lawyer, and when he writes to you letter after letter you take no more notice of him than a — dog." The old woman was certainly very powerful. The way in which she pronounced that last word did make Lady Eustace ashamed of herself. "Why did n't you answer his letters, unless you knew you were in the wrong? Of course you knew you were in the wrong."

"No, I did n't. A woman is n't obliged to answer everything that is written to her."

"Very well! You just say that before the judge! for you 'll have to go before a judge. I tell you, Lizzie Greystock, or Eustace, or whatever your name is, it 's downright picking and stealing. I suppose you want to sell them."

"I won't stand this, Aunt Penelope," said Lizzie, rising from her seat.

"You must stand it, and you 'll have to stand worse

than that. You don't suppose Mr. Camperdown got me to come here for nothing. If you don't want to be made out to be a thief before all the world —— "

"I won't stand it," shrieked Lizzie. "You have no business to come here and say such things to me. It 's my house."

"I shall say just what I please."

"Miss Macnulty, come in." And Lizzie threw open the door, hardly knowing how the very weak ally whom she now invoked could help her, but driven by the stress of the combat to seek assistance somewhere. Miss Macnulty, who was seated near the door, and who had necessarily heard every word of the conversation, had no alternative but to appear. Of all human beings Lady Linlithgow was to her the most terrible, and yet, after a fashion, she loved the old woman. Miss Macnulty was humble, cowardly, and subservient; but she was not a fool, and she understood the difference between truth and falsehood. She had endured fearful things from Lady Linlithgow; but she knew that there might be more of sound protection in Lady Linlithgow's real wrath than in Lizzie's pretended affection.

"So you are there, are you?" said the countess.

"Yes, I am here, Lady Linlithgow."

"Listening, I suppose. Well, so much the better. You know well enough, and you can tell her. You ain't a fool, though I suppose you 'll be afraid to open your mouth."

"Julia," said Lady Eustace, "will you have the kindness to see that my aunt is shown to her carriage? I cannot stand her violence, and I will go up-stairs." So saying she made her way very grace-

fully into the back drawing-room, whence she could escape to her bedroom.

But her aunt fired a last shot at her. "Unless you do as you 're bid, Lizzie, you 'll find yourself in prison as sure as eggs." Then, when her niece was beyond hearing, she turned to Miss Macnulty. "I suppose you 've heard about these diamonds, Macnulty?"

"I know she 's got them, Lady Linlithgow."

"She has no more right to them than you have. I suppose you 're afraid to tell her so, lest she should turn you out; but it 's well she should know it. I 've done my duty. Never mind about the servant. I 'll find my way out of the house." Nevertheless the bell was rung, and the countess was shown to her carriage with proper consideration.

The two ladies went to the opera, and it was not till after their return, and just as they were going to bed, that anything further was said about either the necklace or the visit. Miss Macnulty would not begin the subject, and Lizzie purposely postponed it. But not for a moment had it been off Lady Eustace's mind. She did not care much for music, though she professed to do so, and thought that she did. But on this night, had she at other times been a slave to Saint Cecilia, she would have been free from that thraldom. The old woman's threats had gone into her very heart's blood. Theft, and prison, and juries, and judges had been thrown at her head so violently that she was almost stunned. Could it really be the case that they would prosecute her for stealing? She was Lady Eustace, and who but Lady Eustace should have these diamonds or be allowed to wear them? Nobody could say that Sir Florian had not given them to

her. It could not, surely, be brought against her as an actual crime that she had not answered Mr. Camperdown's letters? And yet she was not sure. Her ideas about law and judicial proceedings were very vague. Of what was wrong and what was right she had a distinct notion. She knew well enough that she was endeavouring to steal the Eustace diamonds; but she did not in the least know what power there might be in the law to prevent, or to punish her for the intended theft. She knew well that the thing was not really her own; but there were, as she thought, so many points in her favour, that she felt it to be a cruelty that any one should grudge her the plunder. Was not she the only Lady Eustace living? As to these threats from Mr. Camperdown and Lady Linlithgow, she felt certain they would be used against her whether they were true or false. She would break her heart should she abandon her prey and afterward find that Mr. Camperdown would have been wholly powerless against her had she held on to it. But then who would tell her the truth? She was sharp enough to understand, or at any rate suspicious enough to believe, that Mr. Mopus would be actuated by no other desire in the matter than that of running up a bill against her. "My dear," she said to Miss Macnulty, as they went up-stairs after the opera, "come into my room a moment. You heard all that my aunt said."

"I could not help hearing. You told me to stay there, and the door was ajar."

"I wanted you to hear. Of course what she said was the greatest nonsense in the world."

"I don't know."

"When she talked about my being taken to prison

for not answering a lawyer's letter, that must be nonsense."

"I suppose that was."

"And then she is such a ferocious old termagant — such an old vulturess. Now is n't she a ferocious old termagant?" Lizzie paused for an answer, desirous that her companion should join her in her enmity against her aunt; but Miss Macnulty was unwilling to say anything against one who had been her protectress, and might, perhaps, be her protectress again. "You don't mean to say you don't hate her?" said Lizzie. "If you did n't hate her after all she has done to you, I should despise you. Don't you hate her?"

"I think she 's a very upsetting old woman," said Miss Macnulty.

"Oh, you poor creature! Is that all you dare say about her?"

"I 'm obliged to be a poor creature," said Miss Macnulty, with a red spot on each of her cheeks.

Lady Eustace understood this, and relented. "But you need n't be afraid," she said, "to tell me what you think."

"About the diamonds, you mean."

"Yes, about the diamonds."

"You have enough without them. I 'd give 'em up for peace and quiet." That was Miss Macnulty's advice.

"No, I have n't enough, or nearly enough. I 've had to buy ever so many things since my husband died. They 've done all they could to be hard to me. They made me pay for the very furniture at Portray." This was n't true; but it was true that

Lizzie had endeavoured to palm off on the Eustace estate bills for new things which she had ordered for her own country-house. "I have n't near enough. I am in debt already. People talked as though I were the richest woman in the world; but when it comes to be spent, I ain't rich. Why should I give them up if they 're my own?"

"Not if they 're your own."

"If I give you a present and then die, people can't come and take it away afterwards because I did n't put it into my will. There 'd be no making presents like that at all." This Lizzie said with an evident conviction in the strength of her argument.

"But this necklace is so very valuable."

"That can't make a difference. If a thing is a man's own he can give it away; — not a house, or a farm, or a wood, or anything like that, but a thing that he can carry about with him — of course he can give it away."

"But perhaps Sir Florian did n't mean to give it for always," suggested Miss Macnulty.

"But perhaps he did. He told me that they were mine, and I shall keep them. So that 's the end of it. You can go to bed now." And Miss Macnulty went to bed.

Lizzie, as she sat thinking of it, owned to herself that no help was to be expected in that quarter. She was not angry with Miss Macnulty, who was, almost of necessity, a poor creature. But she was convinced more strongly than ever that some friend was necessary to her who should not be a poor creature. Lord Fawn, though a peer, was a poor creature. Frank Greystock she believed to be as strong as a house.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. BURKE'S SPEECHES.

Lucy Morris had been told by Lady Fawn that — in point of fact, that, being a governess, she ought to give over falling in love with Frank Greystock, and she had not liked it. Lady Fawn, no doubt, had used words less abrupt — had probably used but few words, and had expressed her meaning chiefly by little winks, and shakings of her head, and small gestures of her hands, and had ended by a kiss — in all of which she had intended to mingle mercy with justice, and had, in truth, been full of love. Nevertheless, Lucy had not liked it. No girl likes to be warned against falling in love, whether the warning be needed or not needed. In this case Lucy knew very well that the caution was too late. It might be all very well for Lady Fawn to decide that her governess should not receive visits from a lover in her house; and then the governess might decide whether, in those circumstances, she would remain or go away; but Lady Fawn could have no right to tell her governess not to be in love. All this Lucy said to herself over and over again, and yet she knew that Lady Fawn had treated her well. The old woman had kissed her, and purred over her, and praised her, and had really loved her. As a matter of course, Lucy was not entitled to have a lover. Lucy knew that well enough. As she walked alone among

the shrubs she made arguments in defence of Lady Fawn as against herself. And yet at every other minute she would blaze up into a grand wrath, and picture to herself a scene in which she would tell Lady Fawn boldly that as her lover had been banished from Fawn Court, she, Lucy, would remain there no longer. There were but two objections to this course. The first was that Frank Greystock was not her lover; and the second, that on leaving Fawn Court she would not know whither to betake herself. It was understood by everybody that she was never to leave Fawn Court till an unexceptionable home should be found for her, either with the Hittaways or elsewhere. Lady Fawn would no more allow her to go away, depending for her future on the mere chance of some promiscuous engagement, than she would have turned one of her own daughters out of the house in the same forlorn condition. Lady Fawn was a tower of strength to Lucy. But then a tower of strength may at any moment become a dungeon.

Frank Greystock was not her lover. Ah, there was the worst of it all! She had given her heart and had got nothing in return. She conned it all over in her own mind, striving to ascertain whether there was any real cause for shame to her in her conduct. Had she been unmaidenly? Had she been too forward with her heart? Had it been extracted from her, as women's hearts are extracted, by efforts on the man's part; or had she simply chucked it away from her to the first comer? Then she remembered certain scenes at the deanery, words that had been spoken, looks that had been turned upon her, a pressure of the hand late at night, a little whisper, a ribbon that had been begged,

a flower that had been given; and once, once ——; then there came a burning blush upon her cheek that there should have been so much, and yet so little that was of avail. She had no right to say to any one that the man was her lover. She had no right to assure herself that he was her lover. But she knew that some wrong was done her in that he was not her lover.

Of the importance of her own self as a living thing with a heart to suffer and a soul to endure, she thought enough. She believed in herself, thinking of herself, that should it ever be her lot to be a man's wife, she would be to him a true, loving friend and companion, living in his joys, and fighting, if it were necessary, down to the stumps of her nails in his interests. But of what she had to give over and above her heart and intellect she never thought at all. Of personal beauty she had very little appreciation even in others. The form and face of Lady Eustace, which indeed were very lovely, were distasteful to her; whereas she delighted to look upon the broad, plain colourless countenance of Lydia Fawn, who was endeared to her by frank good-humour and an unselfish disposition. In regard to men, she had never asked herself the question whether this man was handsome or that man ugly. Of Frank Greystock she knew that his face was full of quick intellect; and of Lord Fawn she knew that he bore no outward index of mind. One man she not only loved, but could not help loving. The other man, as regarded that sort of sympathy which marriage should recognise, must always have been worlds asunder from her. She knew that men demand that women shall possess beauty, and she certainly had never thought of herself as beautiful; but it did not

occur to her that on that account she was doomed to fail. She was too strong-hearted for any such fear. She did not think much of these things, but felt herself to be so far endowed as to be fit to be the wife of such a man as Frank Greystock. She was a proud, stout, self-confident, but still modest little woman, too fond of truth to tell lies of herself even to herself. She was possessed of a great power of sympathy, genial, very social, greatly given to the mirth of conversation — though in talking she would listen much and say but little. She was keenly alive to humour, and had at her command a great fund of laughter, which would illumine her whole face without producing a sound from her mouth. She knew herself to be too good to be a governess for life; and yet how could it be otherwise with her?

Lady Linlithgow's visit to her niece had been made on a Thursday, and on that same evening Frank Greystock had asked his question in the House of Commons — or rather had made his speech about the Sawab of Mygawb. We all know the meaning of such speeches. Had not Frank belonged to the party that was out, and had not the resistance to the Sawab's claim come from the party that was in, Frank would not probably have cared much about the prince. We may be sure that he would not have troubled himself to read a line of that very dull and long pamphlet of which he had to make himself master before he could venture to stir in the matter, had not the road of Opposition been open to him in that direction. But what exertion will not a politician make with the view of getting the point of his lance within the joints of his enemies' harness? Frank made his speech, and made it very well. It was

just the case for a lawyer, admitting that kind of advocacy which it is a lawyer's business to practise. The Indian minister of the day, Lord Fawn's chief, had determined, after much anxious consideration, that it was his duty to resist the claim; and then, for resisting it, he was attacked. Had he yielded to the claim, the attack would have been as venomous, and very probably would have come from the same quarter. No blame by such an assertion is cast upon the young Conservative aspirant for party honours. It is thus the war is waged. Frank Greystock took up the Sawab's case, and would have drawn mingled tears and indignation from his hearers, had not his hearers all known the conditions of the contest. On neither side did the hearers care much for the Sawab's claims, but they felt that Greystock was making good his own claims to some future reward from his party. He was very hard upon the minister, and he was hard also upon Lord Fawn, stating that the cruelty of Government ascendancy had never been put forward as a doctrine in plainer terms than those which had been used in "another place" in reference to the wrongs of this poor ill-used native chieftain. This was very grievous to Lord Fawn, who had personally desired to favour the ill-used chieftain; and harder again because he and Greystock were intimate with each other. He felt the thing keenly, and was full of his grievance when, in accordance with his custom, he came down to Fawn Court on the Saturday evening.

The Fawn family, which consisted entirely of women, dined early. On Saturdays, when his lordship would come down, a dinner was prepared for him alone. On Sundays they all dined together at three o'clock.

On Sunday evening Lord Fawn would return to town to prepare himself for his Monday's work. Perhaps, also, he disliked the sermon which Lady Fawn always read to the assembled household at nine o'clock on Sunday evening. On this Saturday he came out into the grounds after dinner, where the oldest unmarried daughter, the present Miss Fawn, was walking with Lucy Morris. It was almost a summer evening; so much so, that some of the party had been sitting on the garden benches, and four of the girls were still playing croquet on the lawn, though there was hardly light enough to see the balls. Miss Fawn had already told Lucy that her brother was very angry with Mr. Greystock. Now, Lucy's sympathies were all with Frank and the Sawab. She had endeavoured, indeed, and had partially succeeded, in perverting the Under-Secretary. Nor did she now intend to change her opinions, although all the Fawn girls, and Lady Fawn, were against her. When a brother or a son is an Under-Secretary of State, sisters and mothers will constantly be on the side of the Government, so far as that Under-Secretary's office is concerned.

"Upon my word, Frederic," said Augusta Fawn, "I do think Mr. Greystock was too bad."

"There 's nothing these fellows won't say or do," exclaimed Lord Fawn. "I can't understand it myself. When I 've been in opposition, I never did that kind of thing."

"I wonder whether it was because he is angry with mamma," said Miss Fawn. Everybody who knew the Fawns knew that Augusta Fawn was not clever, and that she would occasionally say the very thing that ought not to be said.

"Oh dear, no," said the Under-Secretary, who could not endure the idea that the weak women-mind of his family should have, in any way, an influence on the august doings of Parliament.

"You know mamma did ——"

"Nothing of that kind at all," said his lordship, putting down his sister with great authority. "Mr. Greystock is simply not an honest politician. That is about the whole of it. He chose to attack me because there was an opportunity. There is n't a man in either House who cares for such things, personally, less than I do." Had his lordship said "more than he did," he might perhaps have been correct. "But I can't bear the feeling. The fact is, a lawyer never understands what is and what is not fair fighting."

Lucy felt her face tingling with heat, and was preparing to say a word in defence of that special lawyer, when Lady Fawn's voice was heard from the drawing-room window. "Come in, girls. It 's nine o'clock." In that house Lady Fawn reigned supreme, and no one ever doubted for a moment as to her obedience. The clicking of the balls ceased, and those who were walking immediately turned their faces to the drawing-room window. But Lord Fawn, who was not one of the girls, took another turn by himself, thinking of the wrongs he had endured.

"Frederic is so angry about Mr. Greystock," said Augusta, as soon as they were seated.

"I do feel that it was provoking," said the second sister.

"And considering that Mr. Greystock has so often been here, I don't think it was kind," said the third.

Lydia did not speak, but could not refrain from

glancing her eyes at Lucy's face. "I believe everything is considered fair in Parliament," said Lady Fawn.

Then Lord Fawn, who had heard the last words, entered through the window. "I don't know about that, mother," said he. "Gentlemanlike conduct is the same everywhere. There are things that may be said and there are things which may not. Mr. Greystock has altogether gone beyond the usual limits, and I shall take care that he knows my opinion."

"You are not going to quarrel with the man?" asked the mother.

"I am not going to fight him, if you mean that; but I shall let him know that I think that he has transgressed." This his lordship said with that haughty superiority which a man may generally display with safety among the women of his own family.

Lucy had borne a great deal, knowing well that it was better that she should bear such injury in silence; but there was a point beyond which she could not endure it. It was intolerable to her that Mr. Greystock's character as a gentleman should be impugned before all the ladies of the family, every one of whom did, in fact, know her liking for the man. And then it seemed to her that she could rush into the battle, giving a side blow at his lordship on behalf of his absent antagonist, but appearing to fight for the Sawab. There had been a time when the poor Sawab was in favour at Fawn Court. "I think Mr. Greystock was right to say all he could for the prince. If he took up the cause, he was bound to make the best of it." She spoke with energy and with a heightened colour; and Lady Fawn, hearing her, shook her head at her.

"Did you read Mr. Greystock's speech, Miss Morris?" asked Lord Fawn.

"Every word of it, in the 'Times.'"

"And you understood his allusion to what I had been called upon to say in the House of Lords on behalf of the Government?"

"I suppose I did. It did not seem to be difficult to understand."

"I do think Mr. Greystock should have abstained from attacking Frederic," said Augusta.

"It was not — not quite the thing that we are accustomed to," said Lord Fawn.

"Of course I don't know about that," said Lucy. "I think the prince is being used very ill, that he is being deprived of his own property, that he is kept out of his rights, just because he is weak, and I am very glad that there is some one to speak up for him."

"My dear Lucy," said Lady Fawn, "if you discuss politics with Lord Fawn, you 'll get the worst of it."

"I don't at all object to Miss Morris's views about the Sawab," said the Under-Secretary, generously. "There is a great deal to be said on both sides. I know of old that Miss Morris is a great friend of the Sawab."

"You used to be his friend, too," said Lucy.

"I felt for him, and do feel for him. All that is very well. I ask no one to agree with me on the question itself. I only say that Mr. Greystock's mode of treating it was unbecoming."

"I think it was the very best speech I ever read in my life," said Lucy, with headlong energy and heightened colour.

"Then, Miss Morris, you and I have very different opinions about speeches," said Lord Fawn, with severity. "You have, probably, never read Burke's speeches."

"And I don't want to read them," said Lucy.

"That is another question," said Lord Fawn; and his tone and manner were very severe indeed.

"We are talking about speeches in Parliament," said Lucy. Poor Lucy! She knew quite as well as did Lord Fawn that Burke had been a House of Commons orator; but in her impatience, and from absence of the habit of argument, she omitted to explain that she was talking about the speeches of the day.

Lord Fawn held up his hands, and put his head a little on one side. "My dear Lucy," said Lady Fawn, "you are showing your ignorance. Where do you suppose that Mr. Burke's speeches were made?"

"Of course I know they were made in Parliament," said Lucy, almost in tears.

"If Miss Morris means that Burke's greatest efforts were not made in Parliament, that his speech to the electors of Bristol, for instance, and his opening address on the trial of Warren Hastings, were, upon the whole, superior to ——"

"I did n't mean anything at all," said Lucy.

"Lord Fawn is trying to help you, my dear," said Lady Fawn.

"I don't want to be helped," said Lucy. "I only mean that I thought Mr. Greystock's speech as good as it could possibly be. There was n't a word in it that did n't seem to me to be just what it ought to be. I do think that they are ill-treating that poor Indian prince,

and I am very glad that somebody has had the courage to get up and say so."

No doubt it would have been better that Lucy should have held her tongue. Had she simply been upholding against an opponent a political speaker whose speech she had read with pleasure, she might have held her own in the argument against the whole Fawn family. She was a favourite with them all, and even the Under-Secretary would not have been hard upon her. But there had been more than this for poor Lucy to do. Her heart was so truly concerned in the matter, that she could not refrain herself from resenting an attack on the man she loved. She had allowed herself to be carried into superlatives, and had almost been uncourteous to Lord Fawn. "My dear," said Lady Fawn, "we won't say anything more upon the subject." Lord Fawn took up a book. Lady Fawn busied herself in her knitting. Lydia assumed a look of unhappiness, as though something very sad had occurred. Augusta addressed a question to her brother in a tone which plainly indicated a feeling on her part that her brother had been ill-used and was entitled to especial consideration. Lucy sat silent and still, and then left the room with a hurried step. Lydia at once rose to follow her, but was stopped by her mother. "You had better leave her alone just at present, my dear," said Lady Fawn.

"I did not know that Miss Morris was so particularly interested in Mr. Greystock," said Lord Fawn.

"She has known him since she was a child," said his mother.

About an hour afterwards Lady Fawn went up-stairs and found Lucy sitting all alone in the still so-called

school-room. She had no candle, and had made no pretence to do anything since she had left the room down-stairs. In the interval family prayers had been read, and Lucy's absence was unusual and contrary to rule. "Lucy, my dear, why are you sitting here?" said Lady Fawn.

"Because I am unhappy."

"What makes you unhappy, Lucy?"

"I don't know. I would rather you did n't ask me. I suppose I behaved badly down-stairs."

"My son would forgive you in a moment if you asked him."

"No; certainly not. I can beg your pardon, Lady Fawn, but not his. Of course I had no right to talk about speeches, and politics, and this prince in your drawing-room."

"Lucy, you astonish me."

"But it is so. Dear Lady Fawn, don't look like that. I know how good you are to me. I know you let me do things which other governesses may n't do; and say things; but still I am a governess, and I know I misbehaved — to you." Then Lucy burst into tears.

Lady Fawn, in whose bosom there was no stony corner or morsel of hard iron, was softened at once. "My dear, you are more like another daughter to me than anything else."

"Dear Lady Fawn!"

"But it makes me unhappy when I see your mind engaged about Mr. Greystock. There is the truth, Lucy. You should not think of Mr. Greystock. Mr. Greystock is a man who has his way to make in the world, and could not marry you, even if, under other circumstances, he would wish to do so. You know how

frank I am with you, giving you credit for honest, sound good sense. To me and to my girls, who know you as a lady, you are as dear a friend as though you were — anything you may please to think. Lucy Morris is to us our own dear, dear little friend Lucy. But Mr. Greystock, who is a member of Parliament, could not marry a governess."

"But I love him so dearly," said Lucy, getting up from her chair, "that his slightest word is to me more than all the words of all the world beside. It is no use, Lady Fawn. I do love him, and I don't mean to try to give it up." Lady Fawn stood silent for a moment, and then suggested that it would be better for them both to go to bed. During that minute she had been unable to decide what she had better say or do in the present emergency.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONQUERING HERO COMES.

THE reader will perhaps remember that when Lizzie Eustace was told that her aunt was down-stairs Frank Greystock was with her, and that he promised to return on the following day to hear the result of the interview. Had Lady Linlithgow not come at that very moment Frank would probably have asked his rich cousin to be his wife. She had told him that she was solitary and unhappy; and after that what else could he have done but ask her to be his wife? The old countess, however, arrived and interrupted him. He went away abruptly, promising to come on the morrow; but on the morrow he never came. It was a Friday, and Lizzie remained at home for him the whole morning. When four o'clock was passed she knew that he would be at the House. But still she did not stir. And she contrived that Miss Macnulty should be absent the entire day. Miss Macnulty was even made to go to the play by herself in the evening. But her absence was of no service. Frank Greystock came not; and at eleven at night Lizzie swore to herself that should he ever come again, he should come in vain. Nevertheless, through the whole of Saturday she expected him with more or less of confidence, and on the Sunday morning she was still well inclined toward him. It might be that he would come on that day. She could understand that a man with his hands so full of business as

were those of her cousin Frank should find himself unable to keep an appointment. Nor would there be fair ground for permanent anger with such a one, even should he forget an appointment. But surely he would come on the Sunday! She had been quite sure that the offer was about to be made when that odious old harridan had come in and disturbed everything. Indeed, the offer had been all but made. She had felt the premonitory flutter, had asked herself the important question, and had answered it. She had told herself that the thing would do. Frank was not the exact hero that her fancy had painted, but he was sufficiently heroic. Everybody said that he would work his way up to the top of the tree, and become a rich man. At any rate she had resolved; and then Lady Linlithgow had come in! Surely he would come on the Sunday.

He did not come on the Sunday, but Lord Fawn did come. Immediately after morning church Lord Fawn declared his intention of returning at once from Fawn Court to town. He was very silent at breakfast, and his sisters surmised that he was still angry with poor Lucy. Lucy, too, was unlike herself, was silent, sad, and oppressed. Lady Fawn was serious, and almost solemn; so that there was little even of holy mirth at Fawn Court on that Sunday morning. The whole family, however, went to church, and immediately on their return Lord Fawn expressed his intention of returning to town. All the sisters felt that an injury had been done to them by Lucy. It was only on Sundays that their dinner-table was graced by the male member of the family, and now he was driven away. "I am sorry that you are going to desert us, Frederic," said Lady Fawn. Lord Fawn muttered something as

to absolute necessity, and went. The afternoon was very dreary at Fawn Court. Nothing was said on the subject; but there was still the feeling that Lucy had offended. At four o'clock on that Sunday afternoon Lord Fawn was closeted with Lady Eustace.

The "closeting" consisted simply in the fact that Miss Macnulty was not present. Lizzie fully appreciated the pleasure, and utility, and general convenience of having a companion, but she had no scruple whatever in obtaining absolute freedom for herself when she desired it. "My dear," she would say, "the best friends in the world should n't always be together; should they? Would n't you like to go to the Horticultural?" Then Miss Macnulty would go to the Horticultural, or else up into her own bedroom. When Lizzie was beginning to wax wrathful again because Frank Greystock did not come, Lord Fawn made his appearance. "How kind this is," said Lizzie. "I thought you were always at Richmond on Sundays."

"I have just come up from my mother's," said Lord Fawn, twiddling his hat. Then Lizzie, with a pretty eagerness, asked after Lady Fawn and the girls, and her dear little friend Lucy Morris. Lizzie could be very prettily eager when she pleased. She leaned forward her face as she asked her questions, and threw back her loose lustrous lock of hair, with her long lithe fingers covered with diamonds — the diamonds, these, which Sir Florian had really given her, or which she had procured from Mr. Benjamin in the clever manner described in the opening chapter. "They are all quite well, thank you," said Lord Fawn. "I believe Miss Morris is quite well, though she was a little out of sorts last night."

"She is not ill, I hope," said Lizzie, bringing the lustrous lock forward again.

"In her temper, I mean," said Lord Fawn.

"Indeed! I hope Miss Lucy is not forgetting herself. That would be very sad, after the great kindness she has received." Lord Fawn said that it would be very sad, and then put his hat down upon the floor. It came upon Lizzie at that moment, as by a flash of lightning — by an electric message delivered to her intellect by that movement of the hat — that she might be sure of Lord Fawn if she chose to take him. On Friday she might have been sure of Frank, only that Lady Linlithgow came in the way. But now she did not feel at all sure of Frank. Lord Fawn was at any rate a peer. She had heard that he was a poor peer — but a peer, she thought, can't be altogether poor. And though he was a stupid owl — she did not hesitate to acknowledge to herself that he was as stupid as an owl — he had a position. He was one of the Government, and his wife would, no doubt, be able to go anywhere. It was becoming essential to her that she should marry. Even though her husband should give up the diamonds, she would not in such case incur the disgrace of surrendering them herself. She would have kept them till she had ceased to be a Eustace. Frank had certainly meant it on that Thursday afternoon; but surely he would have been in Mount street before this if he had not changed his mind. We all know that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. "I have been at Fawn Court once or twice," said Lizzie, with her sweetest grace, "and I always think it a model of real family happiness."

"I hope you may be there very often," said Lord Fawn.

"Ah, I have no right to intrude myself often on your mother, Lord Fawn."

There could hardly be a better opening than this for him had he chosen to accept it. But it was not thus that he had arranged it — for he had made his arrangements. "There would be no feeling of that kind, I am sure," he said. And then he was silent. How was he to deploy himself on the ground before him so as to make the strategy which he had prepared answer the occasion of the day? "Lady Eustace," he said, "I don't know what your views of life may be."

"I have a child, you know, to bring up."

"Ah, yes; that gives a great interest, of course."

"He will inherit a very large fortune, Lord Fawn; too large, I fear, to be of service to a youth of one-and-twenty; and I must endeavour to fit him for the possession of it. That is, and always must be, the chief object of my existence." Then she felt that she had said too much. He was just the man who would be fool enough to believe her. "Not but what it is hard to do it. A mother can of course devote herself to her child; but when a portion of the devotion must be given to the preservation of material interests there is less of tenderness in it. Don't you think so?"

"No doubt," said Lord Fawn; "no doubt." But he had not followed her, and was still thinking of his own strategy. "It's a comfort, of course, to know that one's child is provided for."

"Oh, yes; but they tell me the poor little dear will have forty thousand a year when he's of age; and when I look at him in his little bed, and press him in my arms, and think of all that money, I almost wish that his father had been a poor plain gentleman."

Then the handkerchief was put to her eyes, and Lord Fawn had a moment in which to collect himself.

"Ah! I myself am a poor man, for my rank, I mean."

"A man with your position, Lord Fawn, and your talents and genius for business, can never be poor."

"My father's property was all Irish, you know."

"Was it indeed?"

"And he was an Irish peer till Lord Melbourne gave him an English peerage."

"An Irish peer, was he?" Lizzie understood nothing of this, but presumed that an Irish peer was a peer who had not sufficient money to live upon. Lord Fawn, however, was endeavouring to describe his own history in as few words as possible.

"He was then made Lord Fawn of Richmond, in the peerage of the United Kingdom. Fawn Court, you know, belonged to my mother's father before my mother's marriage. The property in Ireland is still mine, but there 's no place on it."

"Indeed!"

"There was a house, but my father allowed it to tumble down. It 's in Tipperary; not at all a desirable country to live in."

"Oh dear, no! Don't they murder the people?"

"It 's about five thousand a year, and out of that my mother has half for her life."

"What an excellent family arrangement," said Lizzie. There was so long a pause made between each statement that she was forced to make some reply.

"You see, for a peer, the fortune is very small indeed."

"But then you have a salary, don't you?"

"At present I have; but no one can tell how long that may last."

"I 'm sure it's for everybody's good that it should go on for ever so many years," said Lizzie.

"Thank you," said Lord Fawn. "I 'm afraid, however, there are a great many people who don't think so. Your cousin Greystock would do anything on earth to turn us out."

"Luckily my cousin Frank has not much power," said Lizzie. And in saying it she threw into her tone, and into her countenance, a certain amount of contempt for Frank as a man and as a politician, which was pleasant to Lord Fawn.

"Now," said he, "I have told you everything about myself which I was bound, as a man of honour, to tell before I — I — I ——. In short, you know what I mean."

"Oh, Lord Fawn!"

"I have told you everything. I owe no money, but I could not afford to marry a wife without an income. I admire you more than any woman I ever saw. I love you with all my heart." He was now standing upright before her, with the fingers of his right hand touching his left breast, and there was something almost of dignity in his gesture and demeanour. "It may be that you are determined never to marry again. I can only say that if you will trust yourself to me — yourself and your child — I will do my duty truly by you both, and will make your happiness the chief object of my existence." When she had listened to him thus far, of course she must accept him; but he was by no means aware of that. She sat silent, with her hands

folded on her breast, looking down upon the ground; but he did not as yet attempt to seat himself by her. "Lady Eustace," he continued, "may I venture to entertain a hope?"

"May I not have an hour to think of it," said Lizzie, just venturing to turn a glance of her eye upon his face.

"Oh, certainly. I will call again whenever you may bid me."

Now she was silent for two or three minutes, during which he still stood over her. But he had dropped his hand from his breast, and had stooped, and picked up his hat ready for his departure. Was he to come again on Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday? Let her tell him that and he would go. He doubtless reflected that Wednesday would suit him best, because there would be no House. But Lizzie was too magnanimous for this. "Lord Fawn," she said, rising, "you have paid me the greatest compliment that a man can pay a woman. Coming from you it is doubly precious; first, because of your character; and secondly ——"

"Why secondly?"

"Secondly, because I can love you." This was said in her lowest whisper, and then she moved toward him gently, and almost laid her head upon his breast. Of course he put his arm round her waist, but it was first necessary that he should once more disembarrass himself of his hat, and then her head was upon his breast.

"Dearest Lizzie," he said.

"Dearest Frederic," she murmured.

"I shall write to my mother to-night," he said.

"Do, do, dear Frederic."

"And she will come to you at once, I am sure."

"I will receive her and love her as a mother," said

Lizzie, with all her energy. Then he kissed her again, her forehead and her lips, and took his leave, promising to be with her at any rate on Wednesday.

"Lady Fawn!" she said to herself. The name did not sound so well as that of Lady Eustace. But it is much to be a wife; and more to be a peeress.

CHAPTER IX.

SHOWING WHAT THE MISS FAWNS SAID, AND WHAT MRS. HITTAWAY THOUGHT.

In the way of duty Lord Fawn was a Hercules, not, indeed, "climbing trees in the Hesperides," but achieving enterprises which to other men, if not impossible, would have been so unpalatable as to have been put aside as impracticable. On the Monday morning, after he was accepted by Lady Eustace, he was with his mother at Fawn Court before he went down to the India Office.

He had at least been very honest in the description he had given of his own circumstances to the lady whom he intended to marry. He had told her the exact truth; and though she, with all her cleverness, had not been able to realise the facts when related to her so suddenly, still enough had been said to make it quite clear that, when details of business should hereafter be discussed in a less hurried manner, he would be able to say that he had explained all his circumstances before he had made his offer. And he had been careful, too, as to her affairs. He had ascertained that her late husband had certainly settled upon her for life an estate worth four thousand a year. He knew, also, that eight thousand pounds had been left her, but of that he took no account. It might be probable that she would have

spent it. If any of it were left, it would be a god-send. Lord Fawn thought a great deal about money. Being a poor man, filling a place fit only for rich men, he had been driven to think of money, and had become self-denying and parsimonious, perhaps we may say hungry and close-fisted. Such a condition of character is the natural consequence of such a position. There is, probably, no man who becomes naturally so hard in regard to money as he who is bound to live among rich men, who is not rich himself, and who is yet honest. The weight of the work of life in these circumstances is so crushing, requires such continued thought, and makes itself so continually felt, that the mind of the sufferer is never free from the contamination of sixpences. Of such a one it is not fair to judge as of other men with similar incomes. Lord Fawn had declared to his future bride that he had half five thousand a year to spend, or the half, rather, of such actual income as might be got in from an estate presumed to give five thousand a year, and it may be said that an unmarried gentleman ought not to be poor with such an income. But Lord Fawn unfortunately was a lord, unfortunately was a landlord, unfortunately was an Irish landlord. Let him be as careful as he might with his sixpences, his pounds would fly from him, or, as might perhaps be better said, could not be made to fly to him. He was very careful with his sixpences, and was always thinking, not exactly how he might make two ends meet, but how to reconcile the strictest personal economy with the proper bearing of an English nobleman.

Such a man almost naturally looks to marriage as an

assistance in the dreary fight. It soon becomes clear to him that he cannot marry without money, and he learns to think that heiresses have been invented exactly to suit his case. He is conscious of having been subjected to hardship by Fortune, and regards female wealth as his legitimate mode of escape from it. He has got himself, his position, and perhaps his title, to dispose of, and they are surely worth so much per annum. As for giving anything away, that is out of the question. He has not been so placed as to be able to give. But, being an honest man, he will, if possible, make a fair bargain. Lord Fawn was certainly an honest man, and he had been endeavouring for the last six or seven years to make a fair bargain. But then it is so hard to decide what is fair. Who is to tell a Lord Fawn how much per annum he ought to regard himself as worth? He had, on one or two occasions, asked a high price, but no previous bargain had been made. No doubt he had come down a little in his demand in suggesting a matrimonial arrangement to a widow with a child, and with only four thousand a year. Whether or no that income was hers in perpetuity, or only for life, he had not positively known when he made his offer. The will made by Sir Florian Eustace did not refer to the property at all. In the natural course of things, the widow would only have a life-interest in the income. Why should Sir Florian make away, in perpetuity, with his family property? Nevertheless, there had been a rumour abroad that Sir Florian had been very generous; that the Scotch estate was to go to a second son in the event of there being a second son; but that otherwise it was to be at the widow's own

disposal. No doubt, had Lord Fawn been persistent, he might have found out the exact truth. He had, however, calculated that he could afford to accept even the life-income. If more should come of it, so much the better for him. He might, at any rate, so arrange the family matters that his heir, should he have one, should not at his death be called upon to pay something more than half the proceeds of the family property to his mother, as was now done by himself.

Lord Fawn breakfasted at Fawn Court on the Monday, and his mother sat at the table with him, pouring out his tea. "Oh, Frederic," she said, "it is so important!"

"Just so; very important indeed. I should like you to call and see her either to-day or to-morrow."

"That 's of course."

"And you had better get her down here."

"I don't know that she 'll come. Ought I to ask the little boy?"

"Certainly," said Lord Fawn, as he put a spoonful of egg into his mouth; "certainly."

"And Miss Macnulty?"

"No; I don't see that at all. I 'm not going to marry Miss Macnulty. The child, of course, must be one of us."

"And what is the income, Frederic?"

"Four thousand a year. Something more nominally, but four thousand to spend."

"You are sure about that?"

"Quite sure."

"And for ever?"

"I believe so. Of that I am not sure."

"It makes a great difference, Frederic."

"A very great difference indeed. I think it is her own. But at any rate she is much younger than I am, and there need be no settlement out of my property. That is the great thing. Don't you think she 's — nice?"

"She is very lovely."

"And clever?"

"Certainly very clever. I hope she is not self-willed, Frederic."

"If she is, we must try and balance it," said Lord Fawn, with a little smile. But in truth, he had thought nothing about any such quality as that to which his mother now referred. The lady had an income. That was the first and most indispensable consideration. She was fairly well-born, was a lady, and was beautiful. In doing Lord Fawn justice, we must allow that, in all his attempted matrimonial speculations, some amount of feminine loveliness had been combined with feminine wealth. He had for two years been a suitor of Violet Effingham, who was the acknowledged beauty of the day — of Violet Effingham, who at the present time was the wife of Lord Chiltern; and he had offered himself thrice to Madame Max-Goesler, who was reputed to be as rich as she was beautiful. In either case, the fortune would have been greater than that which he would now win, and the money would certainly have been for ever. But in these attempts he had failed; and Lord Fawn was not a man to think himself ill-used because he did not get the first good thing for which he asked.

"I suppose I may tell the girls?" said Lady Fawn.

"Yes, when I am gone. I must be off now, only I could not bear not to come and see you."

"It was so like you, Frederic."

"And you 'll go to-day?"

"Yes, if you wish it — certainly."

"Go up in the carriage, you know, and take one of the girls with you. I would not take more than one. Augusta will be the best. You 'll see Clara, I suppose." Clara was the married sister, Mrs. Hittaway.

"If you wish it."

"She had better call too — say on Thursday. It 's quite as well that it should be known. I sha'n't choose to have more delay than can be avoided. Well, I believe that 's all."

"I hope she 'll be a good wife to you, Frederic."

"I don't see why she should n't. Good-by, mother. Tell the girls I will see them next Saturday." He did n't see why this woman he was about to marry should not be a good wife to him! And yet he knew nothing about her, and had not taken the slightest trouble to make inquiry. That she was pretty he could see; that she was clever he could understand; that she lived in Mount street was a fact; her parentage was known to him; that she was the undoubted mistress of a large income was beyond dispute. But, for aught he knew, she might be afflicted by every vice to which a woman can be subject. In truth, she was afflicted by so many, that the addition of all the others could hardly have made her worse than she was. She had never sacrificed her beauty to a lover — she had never sacrificed anything to anybody — nor did she drink. It would be difficult, perhaps, to say anything else in her favour; and yet Lord Fawn was quite content to marry her, not having seen any reason why she should not make a good wife! Nor had Sir Florian

seen any reason; but she had broken Sir Florian's heart.

When the girls heard the news they were half frightened and half delighted. Lady Fawn and her daughters lived very much out of the world. They also were poor rich people — if such a term may be used — and did not go much into society. There was a butler kept at Fawn Court, and a boy in buttons, and two gardeners, and a man to look after the cows, and a carriage and horses, and a fat coachman. There was a cook and a scullery maid, and two lady's maids — who had to make the dresses — and two housemaids and a dairy-maid. There was a large old brick house to be kept in order, and handsome grounds with old trees. There was, as we know, a governess, and there were seven unmarried daughters. With such incumbrances, and an income altogether not exceeding three thousand pounds per annum, Lady Fawn could not be rich. And yet who would say that an old lady and her daughters could be poor with three thousand pounds a year to spend? It may be taken almost as a rule by the unennobled ones of this country, that the sudden possession of a title would at once raise the price of every article consumed twenty per cent. Mutton that before cost ninepence would cost tenpence a pound, and the mouths to be fed would demand more meat. The chest of tea would run out quicker. The labourer's work, which for the farmer is ten hours a day, for the squire nine, is for the peer only eight. Miss Jones, when she becomes Lady de Jongh, does not pay less than threepence apiece for each "my lady" with which her ear is tickled. Even the baronet when he becomes a lord

has to curtail his purchases because of increased price, unless he be very wide awake to the affairs of the world. Old Lady Fawn, who would not on any account have owed a shilling which she could not pay, and who, in the midst of her economies, was not close-fisted, knew very well what she could do and what she could not. The old family carriage and the two lady's maids were there, as necessaries of life; but London society was not within her reach. It was, therefore, the case that they had not heard very much about Lizzie Eustace. But they had heard something. "I hope she won't be too fond of going out," said Amelia, the second girl.

"Or extravagant," said Georgiana, the third.

"There was some story of her being terribly in debt when she married Sir Florian Eustace," said Diana, the fourth.

"Frederic will be sure to see to that," said Augusta, the eldest.

"She is very beautiful," said Lydia, the fifth.

"And clever," said Cecilia, the sixth.

"Beauty and cleverness won't make a good wife," said Amelia, who was the wise one of the family.

"Frederic will be sure to see that she does n't go wrong," said Augusta, who was not wise.

Then Lucy Morris entered the room with Nina, the cadette of the family. "Oh, Nina, what do you think?" said Lydia.

"My dear!" said Lady Fawn, putting up her hand and stopping further indiscreet speech.

"Oh, mamma, what is it?" asked the cadette.

"Surely Lucy may be told," said Lydia.

"Well, yes; Lucy may be told certainly. There

can be no reason why Lucy should not know all that concerns our family; and the more so as she has been for many years intimate with the lady. My dear, my son is going to be married to Lady Eustace."

"Lord Fawn going to marry Lizzie!" said Lucy Morris, in a tone which certainly did not express unmingled satisfaction.

"Unless you forbid the banns," said Diana.

"Is there any reason why he should not?" said Lady Fawn.

"Oh, no; only it seems so odd. I didn't know that they knew each other; not well, that is. And then ——"

"Then what, my dear?"

"It seems odd; that's all. It's all very nice, I dare say, and I'm sure I hope they will be happy." Lady Fawn, however, was displeased, and did not speak to Lucy again before she started with Augusta on the journey to London.

The carriage first stopped at the door of the married daughter in Warwick Square. Now Mrs. Hittaway, whose husband was chairman of the Board of Civil Appeals, and who was very well known at all Boards and among official men generally, heard much more about things that were going on than did her mother. And, having been emancipated from maternal control for the last ten or twelve years, she could express herself before her mother with more confidence than would have become the other girls. "Mamma," she said, "you don't mean it!"

"I do mean it, Clara. Why should I not mean it?"

"She is the greatest vixen in all London."

"Oh, Clara!" said Augusta.

"And such a liar," said Mrs. Hittaway.

There came a look of pain across Lady Fawn's face, for Lady Fawn believed in her eldest daughter. But yet she intended to fight her ground on a matter so important to her as was this. "There is no word in the English language," she said, "which conveys to me so little of defined meaning as that word vixen. If you can, tell me what you mean, Clara."

"Stop it, mamma."

"But why should I stop it, even if I could?"

"You don't know her, mamma."

"She has visited at Fawn Court more than once. She is a friend of Lucy's."

"If she is a friend of Lucy Morris, mamma, Lucy Morris shall never come here."

"But what has she done? I have never heard that she has behaved improperly. What does it all mean? She goes out everywhere. I don't think she has had any lovers. Frederic would be the last man in the world to throw himself away upon an ill-conditioned young woman."

"Frederic can see just as far as some other men, and not a bit further. Of course she has an income — for her life."

"I believe it is her own altogether, Clara."

"She says so, I don't doubt. I believe she is the greatest liar about London. You find out about her jewels before she married poor Sir Florian, and how much he had to pay for her. Or rather, I 'll find out. If you want to know, mamma, you just ask her own aunt, Lady Linlithgow."

"We all know, my dear, that Lady Linlithgow quarrelled with her."

"It 's my belief that she is over head and ears in debt again. But I 'll learn. And when I have found out, I shall not scruple to tell Frederic. Orlando will find out all about it." Orlando was the Christian name of Mrs. Hittaway's husband. "Mr. Camperdown, I have no doubt, knows all the ins and outs of her story. The long and the short of it is this, mamma, that I 've heard quite enough about Lady Eustace to feel certain that Frederic would live to repent it."

"But what can we do?" said Lady Fawn.

"Break it off," said Mrs. Hittaway.

Her daughter's violence of speech had a most depressing effect upon poor Lady Fawn. As has been said, she did believe in Mrs. Hittaway. She knew that Mrs. Hittaway was conversant with the things of the world, and heard tidings daily which never found their way down to Fawn Court. And yet her son went about quite as much as did her daughter. If Lady Eustace was such a reprobate as was now represented, why had not Lord Fawn heard the truth? And then she had already given in her own adhesion, and had promised to call. "Do you mean that you won't go to her?" said Lady Fawn.

"As Lady Eustace? certainly not. If Frederic does marry her, of course I must know her. That 's a different thing. One has to make the best one can of a bad bargain. I don't doubt they 'd be separated before two years were over."

"Oh, dear, how dreadful!" exclaimed Augusta.

Lady Fawn, after much consideration, was of opinion that she must carry out her intention of calling upon her son's intended bride in spite of all the evil things that had been said. Lord Fawn had undertaken to

send a message to Mount street, informing the lady of the honour intended for her. And in truth Lady Fawn was somewhat curious now to see the household of the woman who might perhaps do her the irreparable injury of ruining the happiness of her only son. Perhaps she might learn something by looking at the woman in her own drawing-room. At any rate she would go. But Mrs. Hittaway's words had the effect of inducing her to leave Augusta where she was. If there were contamination, why should Augusta be contaminated? Poor Augusta! She had looked forward to the delight of embracing her future sister-in-law; and would not have enjoyed it the less, perhaps, because she had been told that the lady was false, profligate, and a vixen. As, however, her position was that of a girl, she was bound to be obedient, though over thirty years old, and she obeyed.

Lizzie was of course at home, and Miss Macnulty was of course visiting the Horticultural Gardens or otherwise engaged. On such an occasion Lizzie would certainly be alone. She had taken great pains with her dress, studying not so much her own appearance as the character of her visitor. She was very anxious, at any rate for the present, to win golden opinions from Lady Fawn. She was dressed richly, but very simply. Everything about her room betokened wealth; but she had put away the French novels, and had placed a Bible on a little table, not quite hidden, behind her own seat. The long lustrous lock was tucked up, but the diamonds were still upon her fingers. She fully intended to make a conquest of her future mother-in-law and sister-in-law; for the note which had come up to her from the India Office had told her that

Augusta would accompany Lady Fawn. "Augusta is my favourite sister," said the enamoured lover, "and I hope that you two will always be friends." Lizzie, when she had read this, had declared to herself that of all the female oafs she had ever seen, Augusta Fawn was the greatest oaf. When she found that Lady Fawn was alone, she did not betray herself, or ask for the beloved friend of the future. "Dear, dear Lady Fawn," she said, throwing herself into the arms and nestling herself against the bosom of the old lady, "this makes my happiness perfect." Then she retreated a little, still holding the hand she had grasped between her own, and looking up into the face of her future mother-in-law. "When he asked me to be his wife, the first thing I thought of was whether you would come to me at once." Her voice as she thus spoke was perfect. Her manner was almost perfect. Perhaps there was a little too much of gesture, too much gliding motion, too violent an appeal with the eyes, too close a pressure of the hand. No suspicion, however, of all this would have touched Lady Fawn had she come to Mount street without calling in Warwick Square on the way. But those horrible words of her daughter were ringing in her ears, and she did not know how to conduct herself.

"Of course I came as soon as he told me," she said.

"And you will be a mother to me?" demanded Lizzie.

Poor Lady Fawn! There was enough of maternity about her to have enabled her to undertake the duty for a dozen sons' wives — if the wives were women with whom she could feel sympathy. And she could feel sympathy very easily, and she was a woman not at all

prone to inquire too curiously as to the merits of a son's wife. But what was she to do after the caution she had received from Mrs. Hittaway? How was she to promise maternal tenderness to a vixen and a liar? By nature she was not a deceitful woman. "My dear," she said, "I hope you will make him a good wife."

It was not very encouraging, but Lizzie made the best of it. It was her desire to cheat Lady Fawn into a good opinion, and she was not disappointed when no good opinion was expressed at once. It is seldom that a bad person expects to be accounted good. It is the general desire of such a one to conquer the existing evil impression; but it is generally presumed that the evil impression is there. "Oh, Lady Fawn!" she said, "I will so strive to make him happy. What is it that he likes? What would he wish me to do and to be? You know his noble nature, and I must look to you for guidance."

Lady Fawn was embarrassed. She had now seated herself on the sofa, and Lizzie was close to her, almost enveloped within her mantle. "My dear," said Lady Fawn, "if you will endeavour to do your duty by him, I am sure he will do his by you."

"I know it. I am sure of it. And I will; I will. You will let me love you, and call you mother?" A peculiar perfume came up from Lizzie's hair which Lady Fawn did not like. Her own girls, perhaps, were not given to the use of much perfumery. She shifted her seat a little, and Lizzie was compelled to sit upright, and without support. Hitherto Lady Fawn had said very little, and Lizzie's part was one difficult to play. She had heard of that sermon read every Sunday evening at Fawn Court, and she believed that Lady

Fawn was peculiarly religious. "There," she said, stretching out her hand backwards and clasping the book which lay upon the small table; "there, that shall be my guide. That will teach me how to do my duty by my noble husband."

Lady Fawn in some surprise took the book from Lizzie's hand, and found that it was the Bible. "You certainly can't do better, my dear, than read your Bible," said Lady Fawn; but there was more of censure than of eulogy in the tone of her voice. She put the Bible down very quietly, and asked Lady Estace when it would suit her to come down to Fawn Court. Lady Fawn had promised her son to give the invitation, and could not now, she thought, avoid giving it.

"Oh, I should like it so much!" said Lizzie. "Whenever it will suit you, I will be there at a minute's notice." It was then arranged that she should be at Fawn Court on that day week, and stay for a fortnight. "Of all things that which I most desire now," said Lizzie, "is to know you and the dear girls, and to be loved by you all."

Lady Eustace, as soon as she was alone in the room, stood in the middle of it, scowling — for she could scowl. "I 'll not go near them," she said to herself; "nasty, stupid, dull, puritanical drones. If he don't like it, he may lump it. After all, it 's no such great catch." Then she sat down to reflect whether it was or was not a catch. As soon as ever Lord Fawn had left her after the engagement was made, she had begun to tell herself that he was a poor creature, and that she had done wrong. "Only five thousand a year!" she said to herself; for she had not perfectly understood that little explanation which he had given respecting

his income. "It 's nothing for a lord." And now again she murmured to herself, "It 's my money he 's after. He 'll find out that I know how to keep what I have got in my own hands."

Now that Lady Fawn had been cold to her, she thought still less of the proposed marriage. But there was this inducement for her to go on with it. If they, the Fawn women, thought that they could break it off, she would let them know that they had no such power.

"Well, mamma, you 've seen her?" said Mrs. Hittaway.

"Yes, my dear; I 've seen her. I had seen her two or three times before, you know."

"And you are still in love with her?"

"I never said that I was in love with her, Clara."

"And what has been fixed?"

"She is to come down to Fawn Court next week, and stay a fortnight with us. Then we shall find out what she is."

"That will be best, mamma," said Augusta.

"Mind, mamma; you understand me. I shall tell Frederic plainly just what I think. Of course he will be offended, and if the marriage goes on, the offence will remain — till he finds out the truth."

"I hope he 'll find out no such truth," said Lady Fawn. She was, however, quite unable to say a word in behalf of her future daughter-in-law. She said nothing as to that little scene with the Bible, but she never forgot it.

CHAPTER X.

LIZZIE AND HER LOVER.

During the remainder of that Monday and all the Tuesday, Lizzie's mind was, upon the whole, averse to matrimony. She had told Miss Macnulty of her prospects, with some amount of exultation; and the poor dependent, though she knew that she must be turned out into the street, had congratulated her patroness. "The Vulturess will take you in again, when she knows you 've nowhere else to go to," Lizzie had said, displaying indeed some accurate discernment of her aunt's character. But after Lady Fawn's visit she spoke of the marriage in a different tone. "Of course, my dear, I shall have to look very close after the settlement."

"I suppose the lawyers will do that," said Miss Macnulty.

"Yes; lawyers! That 's all very well. I know what lawyers are. I 'm not going to trust any lawyer to give away my property. Of course we shall live at Portray, because his place is in Ireland, and nothing shall take me to Ireland. I told him that from the very first. But I don't mean to give up my own income. I don't suppose he 'll venture to suggest such a thing." And then again she grumbled. "It 's all very well being in the Cabinet——!"

"Is Lord Fawn in the Cabinet?" asked Miss Macnulty, who in such matters was not altogether ignorant.

"Of course he is," said Lizzie, with an angry gesture. It may seem unjust to accuse her of being stupidly unacquainted with circumstances, and a liar at the same time; but she was both. She said that Lord Fawn was in the Cabinet because she had heard some one speak of him as not being a Cabinet Minister, and in so speaking appear to slight his political position. Lizzie did not know how much her companion knew, and Miss Macnulty did not comprehend the depth of the ignorance of her patroness. Thus the lies which Lizzie told were amazing to Miss Macnulty. To say that Lord Fawn was in the Cabinet, when all the world knew that he was an Under-Secretary! What good could a woman get from an assertion so plainly, so manifestly false? But Lizzie knew nothing of Under-Secretaries. Lord Fawn was a lord, and even Commoners were in the Cabinet. "Of course he is," said Lizzie; "but I sha'n't have my drawing-room made a Cabinet. They sha'n't come here." And then again on the Tuesday evening she displayed her independence. "As for those women down at Richmond, I don't mean to be overrun by them, I can tell you. I said I would go there, and of course I shall keep my word."

"I think you had better go," said Miss Macnulty.

"Of course, I shall go. I don't want anybody to tell me where I 'm to go, my dear, and where I 'm not. But it 'll be about the first and the last. And as for bringing those dowdy girls out in London, it 's the last thing I shall think of doing. Indeed, I doubt whether they can afford to dress themselves." As she went up to bed on the Tuesday evening, Miss Macnulty doubted whether the match would go on. She never believed her friend's statements; but if spoken words might be

supposed to mean anything, Lady Eustace's words on that Tuesday betokened a strong dislike to everything appertaining to the Fawn family. She had even ridiculed Lord Fawn himself, declaring that he understood nothing about anything beyond his office.

And, in truth, Lizzie had almost made up her mind to break it off. All that she would gain did not seem to weigh down with sufficient preponderance all that she would lose. Such were her feelings on the Tuesday night. But on the Wednesday morning she received a note which threw her back violently upon the Fawn interest. The note was as follows: —

"Messrs. Camperdown and Son present their compliments to Lady Eustace. They have received instructions to proceed by law for the recovery of the Eustace diamonds, now in Lady Eustace's hands, and will feel obliged to Lady Eustace if she will communicate to them the name and address of her attorney.

62 New Square, 30 May, 186—.

The effect of this note was to drive Lizzie back upon the Fawn interest. She was frightened about the diamonds, and was, nevertheless, almost determined not to surrender them. At any rate, in such a strait she would want assistance, either in keeping them or in giving them up. The lawyer's letter afflicted her with a sense of weakness, and there was strength in the Fawn connection. As Lord Fawn was so poor, perhaps he would adhere to the jewels. She knew that she could not fight Mr. Camperdown with no other assistance than what Messrs. Mowbray and Mopus might give her, and therefore her heart softened toward her betrothed. "I suppose Frederic will be here to-day," she said to

Miss Macnulty, as they sat at breakfast together about noon. Miss Macnulty nodded. "You can have a cab, you know, if you like to go anywhere." Miss Macnulty said she thought she would go to the National Gallery. "And you can walk back, you know," said Lizzie.

"I can walk there and back, too," said Miss Macnulty, in regard to whom it may be said that the last ounce would sometimes almost break the horse's back.

"Frederic" came, and was received very graciously. Lizzie had placed Mr. Camperdown's note on the little table behind her, beneath the Bible, so that she might put her hand upon it at once if she could make an opportunity of showing it to her future husband. "Frederic" sat himself beside her, and the intercourse for a while was such as might be looked for between two lovers of whom one was a widow and the other an Under-Secretary of State from the India Office. They were loving, but discreetly amatory, talking chiefly of things material, each flattering the other, and each hinting now and again at certain little circumstances of which a more accurate knowledge seemed to be desirable. The one was conversant with things in general, but was slow; the other was quick as a lizard in turning hither and thither, but knew almost nothing. When she told Lord Fawn that the Ayrshire estate was "her own, to do what she liked with," she did not know that he would certainly find out the truth from other sources before he married her. Indeed, she was not quite sure herself whether the statement was true or false, though she would not have made it so frequently had her idea of the truth been a fixed idea. It had all been explained to her; but there had been

something about a second son, and there was no second son. Perhaps she might have a second son yet, a future little Lord Fawn, and he might inherit it. In regard to honesty, the man was superior to the woman, because his purpose was declared, and he told no lies; but the one was as mercenary as the other. It was not love that had brought Lord Fawn to Mount street.

"What is the name of your place in Ireland?" she asked.

"There is no house, you know."

"But there was one, Frederic?"

"The town-land where the house used to be is called Killeagent. The old demesne is called Killaud."

"What pretty names! and — and — does it go a great many miles?" Lord Fawn explained that it did run a good many miles up into the mountains. "How beautifully romantic!" said Lizzie. "But the people live on the mountain and pay rent?"

Lord Fawn asked no such inept questions respecting the Ayrshire property, but he did inquire who was Lizzie's solicitor. "Of course there will be things to be settled," he said, "and my lawyer had better see yours. Mr. Camperdown is a ——"

"Mr. Camperdown!" almost shrieked Lizzie. Lord Fawn then explained, with some amazement, that Mr. Camperdown was his lawyer. As far as his belief went, there was not a more respectable gentleman in the profession. Then he inquired whether Lizzie had any objection to Mr. Camperdown. "Mr. Camperdown was Sir Florian's lawyer," said Lizzie.

"That will make it all the easier, I should think," said Lord Fawn.

"I don't know how that may be," said Lizzie, trying

to bring her mind to work upon the subject steadily. "Mr. Camperdown has been very uncourteous to me; I must say that; and, as I think, unfair. He wishes to rob me now of a thing that is quite my own."

"What sort of a thing?" asked Lord Fawn slowly.

"A very valuable thing. I'll tell you all about it, Frederic. Of course I'll tell you everything now. I never could keep back anything from one that I loved. It's not my nature. There; you might as well read that note." Then she put her hand back and brought Mr. Camperdown's letter from under the Bible. Lord Fawn read it very attentively, and as he read it there came upon him a great doubt. What sort of woman was this to whom he had engaged himself because she was possessed of an income? That Mr. Camperdown should be in the wrong in such a matter was an idea which never occurred to Lord Fawn. There is no form of belief stronger than that which the ordinary English gentleman has in the discretion and honesty of his own family lawyer. What his lawyer tells him to do he does. What his lawyer tells him to sign he signs. He buys and sells in obedience to the same direction, and feels perfectly comfortable in the possession of a guide who is responsible and all but divine.

"What diamonds are they?" asked Lord Fawn in a very low voice.

"They are my own — altogether my own. Sir Florian gave them to me. When he put them into my hands he said that they were to be my own for ever and ever. 'There,' said he, 'those are yours to do what you choose with them.' After that they ought n't to ask me to give them back, ought they? If you had been married before, and your wife had given you a keepsake,

to keep for ever and ever, would you give it up to a lawyer? You would not like it, would you, Frederic?" She had put her hand on his and was looking up into his face as she asked the question. Again, perhaps, the acting was a little overdone; but there were the tears in her eyes, and the tone of her voice was perfect.

"Mr. Camperdown calls them Eustace diamonds — family diamonds," said Lord Fawn. "What do they consist of? What are they worth?"

"I 'll show them to you," said Lizzie, jumping up and hurrying out of the room. Lord Fawn, when he was alone, rubbed his hands over his eyes and thought about it all. It would be a very harsh measure on the part of the Eustace family and of Mr. Camperdown to demand from her the surrender of any trinket which her late husband might have given her in the manner she had described. But it was, to his thinking, most improbable that the Eustace people or the lawyer should be harsh to a widow bearing the Eustace name. The Eustaces were by disposition lavish, and old Mr. Camperdown was not one who would be strict in claiming little things for rich clients. And yet here was his letter, threatening the widow of the late baronet with legal proceedings for the recovery of jewels which had been given by Sir Florian himself to his wife as a keepsake! Perhaps Sir Florian had made some mistake, and had caused to be set in a ring or brooch for his bride some jewel which he had thought to be his own, but which had, in truth, been an heirloom. If so, the jewel should, of course, be surrendered, or replaced by one of equal value. He was making out some such solution, when Lizzie returned with the morocco case in her hand. "It was the manner in which he gave it to me," said

Lizzie, as she opened the clasp, "which makes its value to me."

Lord Fawn knew nothing about jewels, but even he knew that if the circle of stones which he saw, with a Maltese cross appended to it, was constituted of real diamonds, the thing must be of great value. And it occurred to him at once that such a necklace is not given by a husband even to a bride in the manner described by Lizzie. A ring, or brooch, or perhaps a bracelet, a lover or a loving lord may bring in his pocket. But such an ornament as this on which Lord Fawn was now looking is given in another sort of way. He felt sure that it was so, even though he was entirely ignorant of the value of the stones. "Do you know what it is worth?" he asked.

Lizzie hesitated a moment and then remembered that "Frederic," in his present position in regard to herself, might be glad to assist her in maintaining the possession of a substantial property. "I think they say its value is about — ten thousand pounds," she replied.

"Ten — thousand — pounds!" Lord Fawn riveted his eyes upon them.

"That 's what I am told — by a jeweller."

"By what jeweller?"

"A man had to come and see them, about some repairs, or something of that kind. Poor Sir Florian wished it. And he said so."

"What was the man's name?"

"I forget his name," said Lizzie, who was not quite sure whether her acquaintance with Mr. Benjamin would be considered respectable.

"Ten thousand pounds! You don't keep them in the house, do you?"

"I have an iron case up-stairs for them, ever so heavy."

"And did Sir Florian give you the iron case?"

Lizzie hesitated for a moment. "Yes," said she. "That is — no. But he ordered it to be made; and then it came, after he was — dead."

"He knew their value, then."

"Oh dear, yes. Though he never named any sum. He told me, however, that they were very — very valuable."

Lord Fawn did not immediately recognise the falseness of every word that the woman said to him, because he was slow and could not think and hear at the same time. But he was at once involved in a painful maze of doubt and almost of dismay. An action for the recovery of jewels brought against the lady whom he was engaged to marry, on behalf of the family of her late husband, would not suit him at all. To have his hands quite clean, to be above all evil report, to be respectable, as it were, all round, was Lord Fawn's special ambition. He was a poor man, and a greedy man, but he would have abandoned his official salary at a moment's notice, rather than there should have fallen on him a breath of public opinion hinting that it ought to be abandoned. He was especially timid, and lived in a perpetual fear lest the newspapers should say something hard of him. In that matter of the Sawab he had been very wretched, because Frank Greystock had accused him of being an administrator of tyranny. He would have liked his wife to have ten thousand pounds' worth of diamonds very well; but he would rather go without a wife forever — and without a wife's fortune — than marry a woman subject to an action for claim-

ing diamonds not her own. "I think," said he at last, "that if you were to put them into Mr. Camperdown's hands ——"

"Into Mr. Camperdown's hands!"

"And then let the matter be settled by arbitration ——"

"Arbitration? That means going to law?"

"No, dearest; that means not going to law. The diamonds would be intrusted to Mr. Camperdown; and then some one would be appointed to decide whose property they were."

"They 're my property," said Lizzie.

"But he says they belong to the family."

"He 'll say anything," said Lizzie.

"My dearest girl, there can't be a more respectable man than Mr. Camperdown. You must do something of the kind, you know."

"I sha'n't do anything of the kind," said Lizzie. "Sir Florian Eustace gave them to me, and I shall keep them." She did not look at her lover as she spoke; but he looked at her, and did not like the change which he saw on her countenance. And he did not like the circumstances in which he found himself placed. "Why should Mr. Camperdown interfere?" continued Lizzie. "If they don't belong to me, they belong to my son; and who has so good a right to keep them for him as I have? But they belong to me."

"They should not be kept in a private house like this at all, if they are worth all that money."

"If I were to let them go, Mr. Camperdown would get them. There 's nothing he would n't do to get them. Oh, Frederic, I hope you 'll stand to me, and not see me injured. Of course I only want them for my darling child."

Frederic's face had become very long, and he was much disturbed in his mind. He could only suggest that he himself would go and see Mr. Camperdown and ascertain what ought to be done. To the last he adhered to his assurance that Mr. Camperdown could do no evil; till Lizzie, in her wrath, asked him whether he believed Mr. Camperdown's word before hers. "I think he would understand a matter of business better than you," said the prudent lover.

"He wants to rob me," said Lizzie, "and I shall look to you to prevent it."

When Lord Fawn took his leave, which he did not do till he had counselled her again and again to leave the matter in Mr. Camperdown's hands, the two were not in good accord together. It was his fixed purpose, as he declared to her, to see Mr. Camperdown; and it was her fixed purpose, so at least she declared to him, to keep the diamonds, in spite of Mr. Camperdown. "But, my dear, if it's decided against you," said Lord Fawn gravely.

"It can't be decided against me, if you stand by me as you ought to do."

"I can do nothing," said Lord Fawn, in a tremor. Then Lizzie looked at him, and her look, which was very eloquent, called him a poltroon as plain as a look could speak. Then they parted, and the signs of affection between them were not satisfactory.

The door was hardly closed behind him before Lizzie began to declare to herself that he should n't escape her. It was not yet twenty-four hours since she had been telling herself that she did not like the engagement and would break it off; and now she was stamping her little feet, and clenching her little hands, and

swearing to herself by all her gods that this wretched, timid lordling should not get out of her net. She did, in truth, despise him because he would not clutch the jewels. She looked upon him as mean and paltry because he was willing to submit to Mr. Camperdown. But, yet, she was prompted to demand all that could be demanded from her engagement, because she thought that she perceived a something in him which might produce in him a desire to be relieved from it. No! He should not be relieved. He should marry her. And she would keep the key of that iron box with the diamonds, and he should find what sort of a noise she would make if he attempted to take it from her. She closed the morocco case, ascended with it to her bedroom, locked it up in the iron safe, deposited the little patent key in its usual place round her neck, and then seated herself at her desk, and wrote letters to her various friends, making known to them her engagement. Hitherto she had told no one but Miss Macnulty, and, in her doubts, had gone so far as to desire Miss Macnulty not to mention it. Now she was resolved to blazon forth her engagement before all the world.

The first "friend" to whom she wrote was Lady Linlithgow. The reader shall see two or three of her letters, and that to the countess shall be the first:

"My Dear Aunt: When you came to see me the other day, I cannot say that you were very kind to me, and I don't suppose you care very much what becomes of me. But I think it right to let you know that I am going to be married. I am engaged to Lord Fawn,

who, as you know, is a peer, and a member of Her Majesty's Government, and a nobleman of great influence. I do not suppose that even you can say anything against such an alliance.

"I am your affectionate niece,

"ELI. EUSTACE."

Then she wrote to Mrs. Eustace, the wife of the Bishop of Bobsborough. Mrs. Eustace had been very kind to her in the first days of her widowhood, and had fully recognised her as the widow of the head of her husband's family. Lizzie had liked none of the Bobsborough people. They were, according to her ideas, slow, respectable, and dull. But they had not found much open fault with her, and she was aware that it was for her interest to remain on good terms with them. Her letter, therefore, to Mrs. Eustace was somewhat less acrid than that written to her Aunt Linlithgow:

"MY DEAR MRS. EUSTACE: I hope you will be glad to hear from me, and will not be sorry to hear my news. I am going to be married again. Of course I am not about to take a step which is in every way so very important without thinking about it a great deal. But I am sure it will be better for my darling little Florian in every way; and as for myself, I have felt for the last two years how unfitted I have been to manage everything myself. I have therefore accepted an offer made to me by Lord Fawn, who is, as you know, a peer of Parliament, and a most distinguished member of Her Majesty's Government; and he is, too, a nobleman of very great influence in every respect, and has a property in Ireland, extending over ever so many miles, and

running up into the mountains. His mansion there is called Killmage, but I am not sure that I remember the name quite rightly. I hope I may see you there some day, and the dear bishop. I look forward with delight to doing something to make those dear Irish happier. The idea of rambling up into our own mountains charms me, for nothing suits my disposition so well as that kind of solitude.

"Of course Lord Fawn is not so rich a man as Sir Florian, but I have never looked to riches for my happiness. Not but what Lord Fawn has a good income from his Irish estates; and then, of course, he is paid for doing Her Majesty's Government; so there is no fear that he will have to live upon my jointure, which, of course, would not be right. Pray tell the dear bishop and dear Margaretta all this, with my love. You will be happy, I know, to hear that my little Flo is quite well. He is already so fond of his new papa!" [Lizzie's turn for lying was exemplified in this last statement, for, as it happened, Lord Fawn had never yet seen the child.]

"Believe me to be always

"Your most affectionate niece,

"ELI. EUSTACE."

There were two other letters — one to her uncle, the dean, and the other to her cousin Frank. There was great doubt in her mind as to the expediency of writing to Frank Greystock; but at last she decided that she would do it. The letter to the dean need not be given in full, as it was very similar to that written to the bishop's wife. The same mention was made of her intended husband's peerage, and the same allusion to

Her Majesty's Government — a phrase which she had heard from Lord Fawn himself. She spoke of the Irish property, but in terms less glowing than she had used in writing to the lady, and ended by asking for her uncle's congratulation — and blessing. Her letter to Frank was as follows, and, doubtless, as she wrote it, there was present to her mind a remembrance of the fact that he himself might have offered to her, and have had her if he would :

"My Dear Cousin : As I would rather that you should hear my news from myself than from any one else, I write to tell you that I am going to be married to Lord Fawn. Of course I know that there are certain matters as to which you and Lord Fawn do not agree — in politics, I mean ; but still I do not doubt but you will think that he is quite able to take care of your poor little cousin. It was only settled a day or two since, but it has been coming on ever so long. You understand all about that, don't you? Of course you must come to my wedding, and be very good to me — a kind of brother, you know ; for we have always been friends, have n't we? And if the dean does n't come up to town, you must give me away. And you must come and see me ever so often ; for I have a sort of feeling that I have no one else belonging to me that I can call really my own, except you. And you must be great friends with Lord Fawn, and must give up saying that he does n't do his work properly. Of course he does everything better than anybody else could possibly do it, except Cousin Frank.

"I am going down next week to Richmond. Lady Fawn has insisted on my staying there for a fortnight.

Oh dear, what shall I do all the time? You must positively come down and see me, and see somebody else too. Only you, naughty coz, you must n't break a poor girl's heart.

"Your affectionate cousin,

"ELI. EUSTACE."

Somebody, in speaking on Lady Eustace's behalf, and making the best of her virtues, had declared that she did not have lovers. Hitherto that had been true of her; but her mind had not the less dwelt on the delight of a lover. She still thought of a possible Corsair who would be willing to give up all but his vices for her love, and for whose sake she would be willing to share even them. It was but a dream, but nevertheless it pervaded her fancy constantly. Lord Fawn, peer of Parliament, and member of Her Majesty's Government, as he was, could not have been such a lover to her. Might it not be possible that there should exist something of romance between her and her cousin Frank? She was the last woman in the world to run away with a man, or to endanger her position by a serious indiscretion; but there might perhaps be a something between her and her cousin, a *liaison* quite correct in its facts, a secret understanding, if nothing more, a mutual sympathy, which should be chiefly shown in the abuse of all their friends; and in this she could indulge her passion for romance and poetry.

CHAPTER XI.

LORD FAWN AT HIS OFFICE.

THE news was soon all about London, as Lizzie had intended. She had made a sudden resolve that Lord Fawn should not escape her, and she had gone to work after the fashion we have seen. Frank Greystock had told John Eustace, and John Eustace had told Mr. Camperdown before Lord Fawn himself, in the slow prosecution of his purpose, had consulted the lawyer about the necklace. "God bless my soul; Lord Fawn!" the old lawyer had said when the news was communicated to him. "Well, yes; he wants money. I don't envy him; that's all. We shall get the diamonds now, John. Lord Fawn is n't the man to let his wife keep what does n't belong to her." Then, after a day or two, Lord Fawn had himself gone to Mr. Camperdown's chambers. "I believe I am to congratulate you, my lord," said the lawyer. "I 'm told you are going to marry —— well, I must n't really say another of my clients, but the widow of one of them. Lady Eustace is a very beautiful woman, and she has a very pretty income too. She has the whole of the Scotch property for her life."

"It 's only for her life, I suppose?" said Lord Fawn.

"Oh, no, no; of course not. There 's been some mistake on her part; at least, so I 've been told.

Women never understand. It 's all as clear as daylight. Had there been a second son, the second son would have had it. As it is, it goes with the rest of the property, just as it ought to do, you know. Four thousand a year is n't so bad, you know, considering that she is n't more than a girl yet, and that she had n't sixpence of her own. When the admiral died, there was n't sixpence, Lord Fawn."

"So I have heard."

"Not sixpence. It 's all Eustace money. She had six or eight thousand pounds, or something like that, besides. She 's as lovely a young widow as I ever saw, and very clever."

"Yes, she is clever."

"By-the-by, Lord Fawn, as you have done me the honour of calling, there 's a stupid mistake about some family diamonds."

"It is in respect to them that I 've come," said Lord Fawn. Then Mr. Camperdown, in his easy, off-hand way, imputing no blame to the lady in the hearing of her future husband, and declaring his opinion that she was doubtless unaware of its value, explained the matter of the necklace. Lord Fawn listened, but said very little. He especially did not say that Lady Eustace had had the stones valued. "They 're real, I suppose?" he asked. Mr. Camperdown assured him that no diamonds more real had ever come from Golconda, or passed through Mr. Garnett's hands.

"They are as well known as any family diamonds in England," said Mr. Camperdown. "She has got into bad hands," continued Mr. Camperdown. "Mowbray and Mopus; horrible people; sharks, that make one blush for one's profession, and I was really afraid there

would have been trouble. But, of course, it 'll be all right now; and if she 'll only come to me, tell her I 'll do everything I can to make things straight and comfortable for her. If she likes to have another lawyer, of course, that 's all right. Only make her understand who Mowbray and Mopus are. It 's quite out of the question, Lord Fawn, that your wife should have anything to do with Mowbray and Mopus." Every word that Mr. Camperdown said was gospel to Lord Fawn.

And yet, as the reader will understand, Mr. Camperdown had by no means expressed his real opinion in this interview. He had spoken of the widow in friendly terms, declaring that she was simply mistaken in her ideas as to the duration of her interest in the Scotch property, and mistaken again about the diamonds; whereas in truth he regarded her as a dishonest, lying, evil-minded harpy. Had Lord Fawn consulted him simply as a client, and not have come to him an engaged lover, he would have expressed his opinion quite frankly; but it is not the business of a lawyer to tell his client evil things of the lady whom that client is engaged to marry. In regard to the property he spoke the truth, and he spoke what he believed to be the truth when he said that the whole thing would no doubt now be easily arranged. When Lord Fawn took his leave, Mr. Camperdown again declared to himself that as regarded money the match was very well for his lordship; but that, as regarded the woman, Lizzie was dear at the price. "Perhaps he does n't mind it," said Mr. Camperdown to himself, "but I would n't marry such a woman myself, though she owned all Scotland."

There had been much in the interview to make Lord

Fawn unhappy. In the first place, that golden hope as to the perpetuity of the property was at an end. He had never believed that it was so; but a man may hope without believing. And he was quite sure that Lizzie was bound to give up the diamonds, and would ultimately be made to give them up. Of any property in them, as possibly accruing to himself, he had not thought much; but he could not abstain from thinking of the woman's grasp upon them. Mr. Camperdown's plain statement, which was gospel to him, was directly at variance with Lizzie's story. Sir Florian certainly would not have given such diamonds in such a way. Sir Florian would not have ordered a separate iron safe for them, with a view that they might be secure in his wife's bedroom. And then she had had them valued, and manifestly was always thinking of her treasure. It was very well for a poor, careful peer to be always thinking of his money, but Lord Fawn was well aware that a young woman such as Lady Eustace should have her thoughts elsewhere. As he sat signing letters at the India Board, relieving himself when he was left alone between each batch by standing up with his back to the fireplace, his mind was full of all this. He could not unravel truth quickly, but he could grasp it when it came to him. She was certainly greedy, false, and dishonest. And — worse than all this — she had dared to tell him to his face that he was a poor creature because he would not support her in her greed, and falsehood, and dishonesty! Nevertheless, he was engaged to marry her! Then he thought of one Violet Effingham whom he had loved, and then came over him some suspicion of a fear that he himself was hard and selfish. And yet what was such a one as he to do?

It was of course necessary for the maintenance of the very constitution of his country that there should be future Lord Fawns. There could be no future Lord Fawns unless he married; and how could he marry without money? "A peasant can marry whom he pleases," said Lord Fawn, pressing his hand to his brow, and dropping one flap of his coat, as he thought of his own high and perilous destiny, standing with his back to the fireplace, while a huge pile of letters lay there before him waiting to be signed.

It was a Saturday evening, and as there was no House there was nothing to hurry him away from the office. He was the occupier for the time of a large, well-furnished official room, looking out into St. James's Park; and as he glanced round it he told himself that his own happiness must be there, and not in the domesticity of a quiet home. The House of Lords, out of which nobody could turn him, and official life — as long as he could hold to it — must be all in all to him. He had engaged himself to this woman, and he must — marry her. He did not think that he could now see any way of avoiding that event. Her income would supply the needs of her home, and then there might probably be a continuation of Lord Fawns. The world might have done better for him — had he been able to find favour in Violet Effingham's sight. He was a man capable of love, and very capable of constancy to a woman true to him. Then he wiped away a tear as he sat down to sign the huge batch of letters. As he read some special letter in which instructions were conveyed as to the insufficiency of the Sawab's claims, he thought of Frank Greystock's attack upon him, and of Frank Greystock's cousin. There had been a time in which

he had feared that the two cousins would become man and wife. At this moment he uttered a malediction against the member for Bobsborough, which might perhaps have been spared had the member been now willing to take the lady off his hands. Then the door was opened, and the messenger told him that Mrs. Hittaway was in the waiting-room. Mrs. Hittaway was, of course, at once made welcome to the Under-Secretary's own apartment.

Mrs. Hittaway was a strong-minded woman — the strongest-minded probably of the Fawn family — but she had now come upon a task which taxed all her strength to the utmost. She had told her mother that she would tell "Frederic" what she thought about his proposed bride, and she had now come to carry out her threat. She had asked her brother to come and dine with her, but he had declined. His engagements hardly admitted of his dining with his relatives. She had called upon him at the rooms he occupied in Victoria street, but of course she had not found him. She could not very well go to his club; so now she had hunted him down at his office. From the very commencement of the interview Mrs. Hittaway was strong-minded. She began the subject of the marriage, and did so without a word of congratulation. "Dear Frederic," she said, "you know that we have all got to look up to you."

"Well, Clara, what does that mean?"

"It means this — that you must bear with me, if I am more anxious as to your future career than another sister might be."

"Now I know you are going to say something unpleasant."

"Yes, I am, Frederic. I have heard so many bad things about Lady Eustace!"

The Under-Secretary sat silent for a while in his great arm-chair. "What sort of evil things do you mean, Clara?" he asked at last. "Evil things are said of a great many people — as you know. I am sure you would not wish to repeat slanders."

Mrs. Hittaway was not to be silenced after this fashion. "Not slanders, certainly, Frederic. But when I hear that you intend to raise this lady to the rank and position of your wife, then of course the truth or falsehood of these reports becomes a matter of great moment to us all. Don't you think you had better see Mr. Camperdown?"

"I have seen him."

"And what does he say?"

"What should he say? Lady Eustace has, I believe, made some mistake about the condition of her property, and people who have heard it have been good-natured enough to say that the error has been wilful. That is what I call slander, Clara."

"And you have heard about her jewels?" Mrs. Hittaway was alluding here to the report which had reached her as to Lizzie's debt to Harter and Benjamin when she married Sir Florian; but Lord Fawn of course thought of the diamond necklace.

"Yes," said he, "I have heard all about them. Who told you?"

"I have known it ever so long. Sir Florian never got over it." Lord Fawn was again in the dark, but he did not choose to commit himself by asking further questions. "And then her treatment of Lady Linlithgow, who was her only friend before she married, was

something quite unnatural. Ask the dean's people what they think of her. I believe even they would tell you."

"Frank Greystock desired to marry her himself."

"Yes, for her money, perhaps; because he has not got a farthing in the world. Dear Frederic, I only wish to put you on your guard. Of course this is very unpleasant, and I should n't do it if I did n't think it my duty. I believe she is artful and very false. She certainly deceived Sir Florian Eustace about her debts; and he never held up his head after he found out what she was. If she has told you falsehoods, of course you can break it off. Dear Frederic, I hope you won't be angry with me."

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Yes, that is all."

"I 'll bear it in mind," he said. "Of course it is n't very pleasant."

"No, I know it is not pleasant," said Mrs. Hittaway, rising, and taking her departure with an offer of affectionate sisterly greeting, which was not accepted with cordiality.

It was very unpleasant. That very morning Lord Fawn had received letters from the Dean and the Bishop of Bobsborough congratulating him on his intended marriage, both those worthy dignitaries of the Church having thought it expedient to verify Lizzie's statements. Lord Fawn was, therefore, well aware that Lady Eustace had published the engagement. It was known to everybody, and could not be broken off without public scandal.

CHAPTER XII.

I ONLY THOUGHT OF IT.

THERE was great perturbation down at Fawn Court. On the day fixed, Monday, June 5, Lizzie arrived. Nothing further had been said by Lady Fawn to urge the invitation ; but, in accordance with the arrangement already made, Lady Eustace, with her child, her nurse, and her own maid, was at Fawn Court by four o'clock. A very long letter had been received from Mrs. Hittaway that morning, the writing of which must have seriously interfered with the tranquillity of her Sunday afternoon. Lord Fawn did not make his appearance at Richmond on the Saturday evening, nor was he seen on the Sunday. That Sunday was, we may presume, chiefly devoted to reflection. He certainly did not call upon his future wife. His omission to do so, no doubt, increased Lizzie's urgency in the matter of her visit to Richmond. Frank Greystock had written to congratulate her. "Dear Frank," she had said in reply, "a woman situated as I am has so many things to think of. Lord Fawn's position will be of service to my child. Mind you come and see me at Fawn Court. I count so much on your friendship and assistance."

Of course she was expected at Richmond, although throughout the morning Lady Fawn had entertained almost a hope that she would n't come. "He was only lukewarm in defending her," Mrs. Hittaway had said

in her letter, "and I still think that there may be an escape." Not even a note had come from Lord Fawn himself, nor from Lady Eustace. Possibly something violent might have been done, and Lady Eustace would not appear. But Lady Eustace did appear, and, after a fashion, was made welcome at Fawn Court.

The Fawn ladies were not good hypocrites. Lady Fawn had said almost nothing to her daughters of her visit to Mount street, but Augusta had heard the discussion in Mrs. Hittaway's drawing-room as to the character of the future bride. The coming visit had been spoken of almost with awe, and there was a general conviction in the dovecote that an evil thing had fallen upon them. Consequently, their affection to the new comer, though spoken in words, was not made evident by signs and manners. Lizzie herself took care that the position in which she was received should be sufficiently declared. "It seems so odd that I am to come among you as a sister," she said. The girls were forced to assent to the claim, but they assented coldly. "He has told me to attach myself especially to you," she whispered to Augusta. The unfortunate chosen one, who had but little strength of her own, accepted the position, and then, as the only means of escaping the embraces of her newly-found sister, pleaded the violence of a headache. "My mother," said Lizzie to Lady Fawn.

"Yes, my dear," said Lady Fawn. "One of the girls had perhaps better go up and show you your room. — I am very much afraid about it," said Lady Fawn to her daughter Amelia. Amelia replied only by shaking her head.

On the Tuesday morning there came a note from

Lord Fawn to his lady love. Of course the letter was not shown, but Lizzie received it at the breakfast table, and read it with many little smiles and signs of satisfaction. And then she gave out various little statements as having been made in that letter. He says this, and he says that, and he is coming here, and going there, and he will do one thing, and he won't do the other. We have often seen young ladies crowing over their lovers' letters, and it was pleasant to see Lizzie crowing over hers. And yet there was but very little in the letter. Lord Fawn told her that what with the House and what with the Office, he could not get down to Richmond before Saturday; but that on Saturday he would come. Then he signed himself "Yours affectionately, Fawn." Lizzie did her crowing very prettily. The outward show of it was there to perfection, so that the Fawn girls really believed that their brother had written an affectionate lover's letter. Inwardly Lizzie swore to herself, as she read the cold words with indignation, that the man should not escape her.

The days went by very tediously. On the Wednesday and the Friday Lady Eustace made an excuse of going up to town, and insisted on taking the unfortunate Augusta with her. There was no real reason for these journeys to London, unless that glance which on each occasion was given to the contents of the iron case was a real reason. The diamonds were safe, and Miss Macnulty was enjoying herself. On the Friday Lizzie proposed to Augusta that they should jointly make a raid upon the member of Her Majesty's Government at his office; but Augusta positively refused to take such a step. "I know he would be angry," pleaded Augusta.

"Pshaw! who cares for his anger?" said Lizzie. But the visit was not made.

On the Saturday — the Saturday which was to bring Lord Fawn down to dinner — another most unexpected visitor made his appearance. At about three o'clock Frank Greystock was at Fawn Court. Now it was certainly understood that Mr. Greystock had been told not to come to Fawn Court as long as Lucy Morris was there. "Dear Mr. Greystock, I 'm sure you will take what I say as I mean it," Lady Fawn had whispered to him. "You know how attached we all are to our dear little Lucy. Perhaps you know ——." There had been more of it; but the meaning of it all was undoubtedly this, that Frank was not to pay visits to Lucy Morris at Fawn Court. Now he had come to see his cousin Lizzie Eustace.

On this occasion Lady Fawn, with Amelia and two of the other girls, were out in the carriage. The unfortunate Augusta had been left at home with her bosom friend; while Cecilia and Nina were supposed to be talking French with Lucy Morris. They were all out in the grounds, sitting upon the benches, and rambling among the shrubberies, when of a sudden Frank Greystock was in the midst of them. Lizzie's expression of joy at seeing her cousin was almost as great as though he had been in fact a brother. She ran up to him and grasped his hand, and hung on his arm, and looked up into his face, and then burst into tears. But the tears were not violent tears. There were just three sobs, and two bright eyes full of water, and a lace handkerchief, and then a smile. "Oh, Frank," she said, "it does make one think so of old times." Augusta had by this time been almost persuaded to believe

in her — though the belief by no means made the poor young woman happy. Frank thought that his cousin looked very well, and said something as to Lord Fawn being "the happiest fellow going." "I hope I shall make him happy," said Lizzie, clasping her hands together.

Lucy meanwhile was standing in the circle with the others. It never occurred to her that it was her duty to run away from the man she loved. She had shaken hands with him, and felt something of affection in his pressure. She did not believe that his visit was made entirely to his cousin, and had no idea at the moment of disobeying Lady Fawn. During the last few days she had been thrown very much with her old friend Lizzie, and had been treated by the future peeress with many signs of almost sisterly affection. "Dear Lucy," Lizzie had said, "you can understand me. These people — oh, they are so good, but they can't understand me." Lucy had expressed a hope that Lord Fawn understood her. "Oh, Lord Fawn — well, yes; perhaps — I don't know. It so often happens that one's husband is the last person to understand one."

"If I thought so, I would n't marry him," said Lucy.

"Frank Greystock will understand you," said Lizzie. It was indeed true that Lucy did understand something of her wealthy friend's character, and was almost ashamed of the friendship. With Lizzie Greystock she had never sympathised, and Lizzie Eustace had always been distasteful to her. She already felt that the less she should see of Lizzie Fawn the better she should like it.

Before an hour was over Frank Greystock was walking round the shrubberies with Lucy — and was walking with Lucy alone. It was undoubtedly the fact that Lady

Eustace had contrived that it should be so. The unfitness of the thing recommended it to her. Frank could hardly marry a wife without a shilling. Lucy would certainly not think at all of shillings. Frank, as Lizzie knew, had been almost at her feet within the last fortnight, and might, in some possible emergency, be there again. In the midst of such circumstances nothing could be better than that Frank and Lucy should be thrown together. Lizzie regarded all this as romance. Poor Lady Fawn, had she known it all, would have called it diabolical wickedness and inhuman cruelty.

"Well, Lucy, what do you think of it?" Frank Greystock said to her.

"Think of what, Mr. Greystock?"

"You know what I mean — this marriage?"

"How should I be able to think? I have never seen them together. I suppose Lord Fawn is n't very rich. She is rich. And then she is very beautiful. Don't you think her very beautiful?"

"Sometimes exquisitely lovely."

"Everybody says so, and I am sure it is the fact. Do you know — but perhaps you 'll think I am envious."

"If I thought you envious of Lizzie, I should have to think you very foolish at the same time."

"I don't know what that means" — she did know well enough what it meant — "but sometimes to me she is almost frightful to look at."

"In what way?"

"Oh, I can't tell you. She looks like a beautiful animal that you are afraid to caress for fear it should bite you — an animal that would be beautiful if its eyes were not so restless and its teeth so sharp and so white."

"How very odd."

"Why odd, Mr. Greystock?"

"Because I feel exactly in the same way about her. I am not in the least afraid that she 'll bite me; and as for caressing the animal — that kind of caressing which you mean — it seems to me to be just what she 's made for. But I do feel sometimes that she is like a cat."

"Something not quite so tame as a cat," said Lucy.

"Nevertheless she is very lovely, and very clever. Sometimes I think her the most beautiful woman I ever saw in the world."

"Do you, indeed?"

"She will be immensely run after as Lady Fawn. When she pleases she can make her own house quite charming. I never knew a woman who could say pretty things to so many people at once."

"You are making her out to be a paragon of perfection, Mr. Greystock."

"And when you add to all the rest that she has four thousand a year, you must admit that Lord Fawn is a lucky man."

"I have said nothing against it."

"Four thousand a year is a very great consideration, Lucy."

Lucy for a while said nothing. She was making up her mind that she would say nothing — that she would make no reply indicative of any feeling on her part. But she was not sufficiently strong to keep her resolution. "I wonder, Mr. Greystock," she said, "that you did not attempt to win the great prize yourself. Cousins do marry."

He had thought of attempting it, and at this moment

he would not lie to her. "The cousinship had nothing to do with it," he said.

"Perhaps you did think of it."

"I did, Lucy. Yes, I did. Thank God, I only thought of it." She could not refrain herself from looking up into his face and clasping her hands together. A woman never so dearly loves a man as when he confesses that he has been on the brink of a great crime, but has refrained and has not committed it. "I did think of it. I am not telling you that she would have taken me. I have no reason whatever for thinking so."

"I am sure she would," said Lucy, who did not in the least know what words she was uttering.

"It would have been simply for her money — her money and her beauty. It would not have been because I love her."

"Never — never ask a girl to marry you unless you love her, Mr. Greystock."

"Then there is only one that I can ever ask," said he. There was nothing, of course, that she could say to this. If he did not choose to go further, she was not bound to understand him. But would he go further? She felt at the moment that an open declaration of his love to herself would make her happy forever, even though it should be accompanied by an assurance that he could not marry her. If they only knew each other — that it was so between them — that, she thought, would be enough for her. And as for him — if a woman could bear such a position, surely he might bear it. "Do you know who that one is?" he asked.

"No," she said, shaking her head.

"Lucy, is that true?"

"What does it matter?"

"Lucy; look at me, Lucy," and he put his hand upon her arm.

"No, no, no," she said.

"I love you so well, Lucy, that I never can love another. I have thought of many women, but could never even think of one as a woman to love except you. I have sometimes fancied I could marry for money and position, to help myself on in the world by means of a wife; but when my mind has run away with me, to revel amidst ideas of feminine sweetness, you have always — always been the heroine of the tale, as the mistress of the happy castle in the air."

"Have I?" she asked.

"Always, always. As regards this," and he struck himself on the breast, "no man was ever more constant. Though I don't think much of myself as a man, I know a woman when I see her." But he did not ask her to be his wife; nor did he wait at Fawn Court till Lady Fawn had come back with the carriage.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHOWING WHAT FRANK GREYSTOCK DID.

Frank Greystock escaped from the dovecote before Lady Fawn had returned. He had not made his visit to Richmond with any purpose of seeing Lucy Morris, or of saying to her when he did see her anything special — of saying anything that should, or anything that should not, have been said. He had gone there, in truth, simply because his cousin had asked him, and because it was almost a duty on his part to see his cousin on the momentous occasion of this new engagement. But he had declared to himself that old Lady Fawn was a fool, and that to see Lucy again would be very pleasant. "See her; of course I 'll see her," he had said. "Why should I be prevented from seeing her?" Now he had seen her, and as he returned by the train to London, he acknowledged to himself that it was no longer in his power to promote his fortune by marriage. He had at last said that to Lucy which made it impossible for him to offer his hand to any other woman. He had not, in truth, asked her to be his wife; but he had told her that he loved her, and could never love any other woman. He had asked for no answer to this assurance, and then he had left her.

In the course of that afternoon he did question himself as to his conduct to this girl, and subjected himself

to some of the rigours of a cross-examination. He was not a man who could think of a girl as the one human being whom he loved above all others, and yet look forward with equanimity to the idea of doing her an injury. He could understand that a man unable to marry should be reticent as to his feelings, supposing him to have been weak enough to have succumbed to a passion which could only mar his own prospects. He was frank enough in owning to himself that he had been thus weak. The weakness had come upon himself early in life, and was there, an established fact. The girl was to him unlike any other girl, or any man. There was to him a sweetness in her companionship which he could not analyse. She was not beautiful. She had none of the charms of fashion. He had never seen her well dressed, according to the ideas of dress which he found to be prevailing in the world. She was a little thing, who, as a man's wife, could attract no attention by figure, form, or outward manner; one who had quietly submitted herself to the position of a governess, and who did not seem to think that in doing so she obtained less than her due. But yet he knew her to be better than all the rest. For him, at any rate, she was better than all the rest. Her little hand was cool and sweet to him. Sometimes, when he was heated and hard at work, he would fancy how it would be with him if she were by him, and would lay it on his brow. There was a sparkle in her eye that had to him more of sympathy in it than could be conveyed by all the other eyes in the world. There was an expression in her mouth when she smiled which was more eloquent to him than any sound. There was a reality and a truth

about her which came home to him, and made themselves known to him as firm rocks which could not be shaken. He had never declared to himself that deceit or hypocrisy in a woman was especially abominable. As a rule he looked for it in women, and would say that some amount of affectation was necessary to a woman's character. He knew that his cousin Lizzie was a little liar — that she was, as Lucy had said, a pretty animal that would turn and bite; and yet he liked his cousin Lizzie. He did not want women to be perfect, so he would say. But Lucy Morris, in his eyes, was perfect, and when he told her that she was ever the queen who reigned in those castles in the air which he built, as others build them, he told her no more than the truth.

He had fallen into these feelings, and could not now avoid them, or be quit of them; but he could have been silent respecting them. He knew that in former days, down at Bobsborough, he had not been altogether silent. When he had first seen her at Fawn Court he had not been altogether silent. But he had been warned away from Fawn Court, and in that very warning there was conveyed, as it were, an absolution from the effect of words hitherto spoken. Though he had called Lady Fawn an old fool, he had known that it was so — had, after a fashion, perceived her wisdom — and had regarded himself as a man free to decide, without disgrace, that he might abandon ideas of ecstatic love and look out for a rich wife. Presuming himself to be reticent for the future in reference to his darling Lucy, he might do as he pleased with himself. Thus there had come a moment in which he had determined that he would ask his rich cousin to marry him.

In that little project he had been interrupted, and the reader knows what had come of it. Lord Fawn's success had not in the least annoyed him. He had only half resolved in regard to his cousin. She was very beautiful no doubt, and there was her income; but he also knew that those teeth would bite and that those claws would scratch. But Lord Fawn's success had given a turn to his thoughts, and had made him think, for a moment, that if a man loved, he should be true to his love. The reader also knows what had come of that — how at last he had not been reticent. He had not asked Lucy to be his wife; but he had said that which made it impossible that he should marry any other woman without dishonour.

As he thought of what he had done himself, he tried to remember whether Lucy had said a word expressive of affection for himself. She had in truth spoken very few words, and he could remember almost every one of them. "Have I?" she had asked, when he told her that she had ever been the princess reigning in his castles. And there had been a joy in the question which she had not attempted to conceal. She had hesitated not at all. She had not told him that she loved him. But there had been something sweeter than such protestation in the question she had asked him. "Is it indeed true," she had said, "that I have been placed there where all my joy and all my glory lies?" It was not in her to tell a lie to him, even by a tone. She had intended to say nothing of her love, but he knew that it had all been told. "Have I?" he repeated the words to himself a dozen times, and as he did so, he could hear her voice. Certainly there never was a voice that brought home to the hearer so strong a sense of its own truth!

Why should he not at once make up his mind to marry her? He could do it. There was no doubt of that. It was possible for him to alter the whole manner of his life, to give up his clubs, to give up even Parliament, if the need to do so was there, and to live as a married man on the earnings of his profession. There was no need why he should regard himself as a poor man. Two things, no doubt, were against his regarding himself as a rich man. Ever since he had commenced life in London he had been more or less in debt; and then, unfortunately, he had acquired a seat in Parliament at a period of his career in which the dangers of such a position were greater than the advantages. Nevertheless he could earn an income on which he and his wife, were he to marry, could live in all comfort; and as to his debts, if he would set his shoulder to the work they might be paid off in a twelvemonth. There was nothing in the prospect which would frighten Lucy, though there might be a question whether he possessed the courage needed for so violent a change.

He had chambers in the Temple; he lived in rooms which he hired from month to month in one of the big hotels at the West End; and he dined at his club, or at the House, when he was not dining with a friend. It was an expensive and a luxurious mode of life, and one from the effects of which a man is prone to drift very quickly into selfishness. He was by no means given to drinking, but he was already learning to like good wine. Small economies in reference to cab-hire, gloves, umbrellas, and railway fares, were unknown to him. Sixpences and shillings were things with which, in his mind, it was grievous to have to burden the

thoughts. The Greystocks had all lived after that fashion. Even the dean himself was not free from the charge of extravagance. All this Frank knew, and he did not hesitate to tell himself that he must make a great change if he meant to marry Lucy Morris. And he was wise enough to know that the change would become more difficult every day that it was postponed. Hitherto the question had been an open question with him. Could it now be an open question any longer? As a man of honour, was he not bound to share his lot with Lucy Morris?

That evening — that Saturday evening — it so happened that he met John Eustace at a club to which they both belonged, and they dined together. They had long known each other, and had been thrown into closer intimacy by the marriage between Sir Florian and Lizzie. John Eustace had never been fond of Lizzie, and now, in truth, liked her less than ever; but he did like Lizzie's cousin, and felt that possibly Frank might be of use to him in the growing difficulty of managing the heir's property and looking after the heir's interests.

"You 've let the widow slip through your fingers," he said to Frank, as they sat together at the table.

"I told you Lord Fawn was to be the lucky man," said Frank.

"I know you did. I had n't seen it. I can only say I wish it had been the other way."

"Why so? Fawn is n't a bad fellow."

"No, not exactly a bad fellow. He is n't, you know, what I call a good fellow. In the first place, he is marrying her altogether for her money."

"Which is just what you advised me to do."

"I thought you really liked her. And then Fawn will be always afraid of her, and won't be in the least afraid of us. We shall have to fight him, and he won't fight her. He's a cantankerous fellow — is Fawn — when he's not afraid of his adversary."

"But why should there be any fighting?"

Eustace paused a minute, and rubbed his face and considered the matter before he answered. "She is troublesome, you know," he said.

"What, Lizzie?"

"Yes; and I begin to be afraid she'll give us as much as we know how to do. I was with Camperdown to-day. I'm blessed if she has n't begun to cut down a whole side of a forest at Portray. She has no more right to touch the timber, except for repairs about the place, than you have."

"And if she lives for fifty years," asked Greystock, "is none to be cut?"

"Yes — by consent. Of course, the regular cutting for the year is done, year by year. That's as regular as the rents, and the produce is sold by the acre. But she is marking the old oaks. What the deuce can she want money for?"

"Fawn will put all that right."

"He'll have to do it," said Eustace. "Since she has been down with old Lady Fawn, she has written a note to Camperdown — after leaving all his letters unanswered for the last twelvemonth — to tell him that Lord Fawn is to have nothing to do with her property, and that certain people, called Mowbray and Mopus, are her lawyers. Camperdown is in an awful way about it."

"Lord Fawn will put it all right," said Frank.

"Camperdown is afraid that he won't. They've met twice since the engagement was made, and Camperdown says that, at the last meeting, Fawn gave himself airs, or was, at any rate, unpleasant. There were words about those diamonds."

"You don't mean to say that Lord Fawn wants to keep your brother's family jewels?"

"Camperdown didn't say that exactly; but Fawn made no offer of giving them up. I was n't there, and only heard what Camperdown told me. Camperdown thinks he 's afraid of her."

"I should n't wonder at that in the least," said Frank.

"I know there 'll be trouble," continued Eustace, "and Fawn won't be able to help us through it. She 's a strong-willed, cunning, obstinate, clever little creature. Camperdown swears he 'll be too many for her, but I almost doubt it."

"And therefore you wish I were going to marry her?"

"Yes, I do. You might manage her. The money comes from the Eustace property, and I 'd sooner it should go to you than a half-hearted, numb-fingered, cold-blooded Whig, like Fawn."

"I don't like cunning women," said Frank.

"As bargains go, it would n't be a bad one," said Eustace. "She 's very young, has a noble jointure, and is as handsome as she can stand. It 's too good a thing for Fawn; too good for any Whig."

When Eustace left him, Greystock lit his cigar and walked with it in his mouth from Pall Mall to the Temple. He often worked there at night when he was not bound to be in the House, or when the House

"And therefore you wish I were going to marry her?"

was not sitting; and he was now intent on mastering the mysteries of some much-complicated legal case which had been confided to him, in order that he might present it to a jury enveloped in increased mystery. But, as he went, he thought rather of matrimony than of law; and he thought especially of matrimony as it was about to affect Lord Fawn. Could a man be justified in marrying for money, or have rational ground for expecting that he might make himself happy by doing so? He kept muttering to himself as he went the Quaker's advice to the old farmer, "Doan't thou marry for munny, but goa where munny is!" But he muttered it as condemning the advice rather than accepting it.

He could look out and see two altogether different kinds of life before him, both of which had their allurements. There was the Belgravia-cum-Pimlico life, the scene of which might extend itself to South Kensington, enveloping the parks and coming round over Park Lane, and through Grosvenor Square and Berkeley Square back to Piccadilly. Within this he might live with lords and countesses and rich folk generally, going out to the very best dinner parties, avoiding stupid people, having everything the world could give, except a wife and family and home of his own. All this he could achieve by the work which would certainly fall in his way, and by means of that position in the world which he had already attained by his wits. And the wife, with the family and house of his own, might be forthcoming, should it ever come in his way to form an attachment with a wealthy woman. He knew how dangerous were the charms of such a life as this to a man growing old among the flesh-pots, without any one

to depend upon him. He had seen what becomes of the man who is always dining out at sixty. But he might avoid that. "Doan't thou marry for munny, but goa where munny is." And then there was that other outlook, the scene of which was laid somewhere north of Oxford street, and the glory of which consisted in Lucy's smile, and Lucy's hand, and Lucy's kiss, as he returned home weary from his work.

There are many men, and some women, who pass their lives without knowing what it is to be or to have been in love. They not improbably marry — the men do, at least, and make good average husbands. Their wives are useful to them, and they learn to feel that a woman, being a wife, is entitled to all the respect, protection, and honour which a man can give, or procure for her. Such men, no doubt, often live honest lives, are good Christians, and depart hence with hopes as justifiable as though they had loved as well as Romeo. But yet, as men, they have lacked a something, the want of which has made them small, and poor, and dry. It has never been felt by such a one that there would be triumph in giving away everything belonging to him for one little whispered, yielding word, in which there should be acknowledgment that he had succeeded in making himself master of a human heart. And there are other men, very many men, who have felt this love, and have resisted it, feeling it to be unfit that Love should be lord of all. Frank Greystock had told himself, a score of times, that it would be unbecoming in him to allow a passion to obtain such mastery of him as to interfere with his ambition. Could it be right that he who, as a young man, had already done so much, who might possibly have before him so high

and great a career, should miss that, because he could not resist a feeling which a little chit of a girl had created in his bosom — a girl without money, without position, without even beauty; a girl as to whom, were he to marry her, the world would say, "Oh, heaven! there has Frank Greystock gone and married a little governess out of old Lady Fawn's nursery"? And yet he loved her with all his heart, and to-day he had told her of his love. What should he do next?

The complicated legal case received neither much ravelling nor unravelling from his brains that night; but before he left his chambers he wrote the following letter:

"MIDNIGHT, Saturday,
"All among my books and papers,
"2 Bolt Court, Middle Temple.

"DEAR, DEAR LUCY: I told you to-day that you ever had been the queen who reigned in those palaces which I have built in Spain. You did not make me much of an answer; but such as it was, only just one muttered doubtful-sounding word, it has made me hope that I may be justified in asking you to share with me a home which will not be palatial. If I am wrong——? But no; I will not think I am wrong, or that I can be wrong. No sound coming from you is really doubtful. You are truth itself, and the muttered word would have been other than it was, if you had not——! may I say, had you not already learned to love me?

"You will feel, perhaps, that I ought to have said all this to you then, and that a letter in such a matter is but a poor substitute for a spoken assurance of affection. You shall have the whole truth. Though I have long loved you, I did not go down to Fawn Court

with the purpose of declaring to you my love. What I said to you was God's truth; but it was spoken without thought at the moment. I have thought of it much since; and now I write to you to ask you to be my wife. I have lived for the last year or two with this hope before me; and now ——. Dear, dear Lucy, I will not write in too great confidence; but I will tell you that all my happiness is in your hands.

"If your answer is what I hope it may be, tell Lady Fawn at once. I shall immediately write to Bobsborough, as I hate secrets in such matters. And if it is to be so, then I shall claim the privilege of going to Fawn Court as soon and as often as I please.

"Yours ever and always, if you will have me,

"F. G."

He sat for an hour at his desk, with his letter lying on the table, before he left his chambers, looking at it. If he should decide on posting it, then would that life in Belgravia-cum-Pimlico, of which in truth he was very fond, be almost closed for him. The lords and countesses, and rich county members, and leading politicians, who were delighted to welcome him, would not care for his wife; nor could he very well take his wife among them. To live with them as a married man, he must live as they lived, and must have his own house in their precincts. Later in life, he might possibly work up to this; but for the present he must retire into dim domestic security and the neighbourhood of Regent's Park. He sat looking at the letter, telling himself that he was now, at this moment, deciding his own fate in life. And he again muttered the Quaker's advice, "Doan't thou marry for munny, but goa where munny

is!" It may be said, however, that no man ever writes such a letter, and then omits to send it. He walked out of the Temple with it in his hand, and dropped it into a pillar letter-box just outside the gate. As the envelope slipped through his fingers, he felt that he had now bound himself to his fate.

CHAPTER XIV.

"DOAN'T THOU MARRY FOR MUNNY."

As that Saturday afternoon wore itself away, there was much excitement at Fawn Court. When Lady Fawn returned with the carriage, she heard that Frank Greystock had been at Fawn Court; and she heard also, from Augusta, that he had been rambling about the grounds alone with Lucy Morris. At any exhibition of old ladies, held before a competent jury, Lady Fawn would have taken a prize on the score of good-humour. No mother of daughters was ever less addicted to scold and to be fretful. But just now she was a little unhappy. Lizzie's visit had not been a success, and she looked forward to her son's marriage with almost unmixed dismay. Mrs. Hittaway had written daily, and in all Mrs. Hittaway's letters some addition was made to the evil things already known. In her last letter Mrs. Hittaway had expressed her opinion that even yet "Frederic" would escape. All this Lady Fawn had, of course, not told to her daughters generally. To the eldest, Augusta, it was thought expedient to say nothing, because Augusta had been selected as the companion of the, alas, too probable future Lady Fawn. But to Amelia something did leak out, and it became apparent that the household was uneasy. Now, as an evil added to this, Frank Greystock had been there in Lady Fawn's absence, walking about the grounds alone with Lucy

Morris. Lady Fawn could hardly restrain herself. "How could Lucy be so very wrong?" she said, in the hearing both of Augusta and Amelia.

Lizzie Eustace did not hear this; but knowing very well that a governess should not receive a lover in the absence of the lady of the house, she made her little speech about it. "Dear Lady Fawn," she said, "my cousin Frank came to see me while you were out."

"So I hear," said Lady Fawn.

"Frank and I are more like brother and sister than anything else. I had so much to say to him; so much to ask him to do! I have no one else, you know, and I had especially told him to come here."

"Of course he was welcome to come."

"Only I was afraid you might think that there was some little lover's trick — on dear Lucy's part, you know."

"I never suspect anything of that kind," said Lady Fawn, bridling up. "Lucy Morris is above any sort of trick. We don't have any tricks here, Lady Eustace." Lady Fawn herself might say that Lucy was "wrong," but no one else in that house should even suggest evil of Lucy. Lizzie retreated smiling. To have "put Lady Fawn's back up," as she called it, was to her an achievement and a pleasure.

But the great excitement of the evening consisted in the expected coming of Lord Fawn. Of what nature would be the meeting between Lord Fawn and his promised bride? Was there anything of truth in the opinion expressed by Mrs. Hittaway that her brother was beginning to become tired of his bargain? That Lady Fawn was tired of it herself — that she disliked Lizzie and was afraid of her, and averse to the idea of

regarding her as a daughter-in-law — she did not now attempt to hide from herself. But there was the engagement, known to all the world, and how could its fulfilment now be avoided? The poor dear old woman began to repeat to herself the first half of the Quaker's advice, "Doan't thou marry for munny."

Lord Fawn was to come down only in time for a late dinner. An ardent lover, one would have thought, might have left his work somewhat earlier on a Saturday, so as to have enjoyed with his sweetheart something of the sweetness of the Saturday summer afternoon; but it was seven before he reached Fawn Court, and the ladies were at that time in their rooms dressing. Lizzie had affected to understand all his reasons for being so late, and had expressed herself as perfectly satisfied. "He has more to do than any of the others," she had said to Augusta. "Indeed the whole of our vast Indian empire may be said to hang upon him just at present;" which was not complimentary to Lord Fawn's chief, the Right Honourable Legge Wilson, who at the present time represented the interests of India in the Cabinet. "He is terribly overworked, and it is a shame; but what can one do?"

"I think he likes work," Augusta had replied.

"But I don't like it, not so much of it; and so I shall make him understand, my dear. But I don't complain. As long as he tells me everything, I will never really complain." Perhaps it might some day be as she desired; perhaps as a husband he would be thoroughly confidential and communicative; perhaps when they two were one flesh he would tell her everything about India; but as yet he certainly had not told her much.

"How had they better meet?" Amelia asked her mother.

"Oh, I don't know; anyhow; just as they like. We can't arrange anything for her. If she had chosen to dress herself early, she might have seen him as he came in; but it was impossible to tell her so." No arrangement was therefore made, and as all the other ladies were in the drawing-room before Lizzie came down, she had to give him his welcome in the midst of the family circle. She did it very well. Perhaps she had thought of it, and made her arrangements. When he came forward to greet her, she put her cheek up, just a little, so that he might see that he was expected to kiss it; but so little that should he omit to do so, there might be no visible awkwardness. It must be acknowledged on Lizzie's behalf, that she could always avoid awkwardness. He did touch her cheek with his lips, blushing as he did so. She had her ungloved hand in his, and, still holding him, returned into the circle. She said not a word; and what he said was of no moment; but they had met as lovers, and any of the family who had allowed themselves to imagine that even yet the match might be broken, now unconsciously abandoned that hope.

"Was he always such a truant, Lady Fawn?" Lizzie asked, when it seemed to her that no one else would speak a word.

"I don't know that there is much difference," said Lady Fawn. "Here is dinner. Frederic, will you give — Lady Eustace your arm?" Poor Lady Fawn! It often came to pass that she was awkward.

There were no less than ten females sitting round the board at the bottom of which Lord Fawn took his

place. Lady Fawn had especially asked Lucy to come in to dinner, and with Lucy had come the two younger girls. At Lord Fawn's right hand sat Lizzie, and Augusta at his left. Lady Fawn had Amelia on one side and Lucy on the other. "So Mr. Greystock was here to-day," Lady Fawn whispered into Lucy's ear.

"Yes; he was here."

"Oh, Lucy."

"I did not bid him come, Lady Fawn."

"I am sure of that, my dear; but — but ——" Then there was no more said on that subject on that occasion.

During the whole of the dinner the conversation was kept up at the other end of the table by Lizzie talking to Augusta across her lover. This was done in such a manner as to seem to include Lord Fawn in every topic discussed. Parliament, India, the Sawab, Ireland, the special privileges of the House of Lords, the ease of a bachelor life, and the delight of having at his elbow just such a rural retreat as Fawn Court — these were the fruitful themes of Lizzie's eloquence. Augusta did her part at any rate with patience; and as for Lizzie herself, she worked with that superhuman energy which women can so often display in making conversation under unfavourable circumstances. The circumstances were unfavourable, for Lord Fawn himself would hardly open his mouth; but Lizzie persevered, and the hour of dinner passed over without any show of ill-humour or of sullen silence. When the hour was over, Lord Fawn left the room with the ladies, and was soon closeted with his mother, while the girls strolled out upon the lawn. Would Lizzie play croquet? No; Lizzie would not play croquet. She thought it probable that she might catch her lover and force him to walk with her

through the shrubberies; but Lord Fawn was not seen upon the lawn that evening, and Lizzie was forced to content herself with Augusta as a companion. In the course of the evening, however, her lover did say a word to her in private. "Give me ten minutes to-morrow between breakfast and church, Lizzie." Lizzie promised that she would do so, smiling sweetly. Then there was a little music, and then Lord Fawn retired to his studies.

"What is he going to say to me?" Lizzie asked Augusta the next morning. There existed in her bosom a sort of craving after confidential friendship, but with it there existed something that was altogether incompatible with confidence. She thoroughly despised Augusta Fawn, and yet would have been willing — in want of a better friend — to press Augusta to her bosom and swear that there should ever be between them the tenderest friendship. She desired to be the possessor of the outward shows of all those things of which the inward facts are valued by the good and steadfast ones of the earth. She knew what were the aspirations, what the ambition of an honest woman; and she knew, too, how rich were the probable rewards of such honesty. True love, true friendship, true benevolence, true tenderness, were beautiful to her, qualities on which she could descant almost with eloquence; and therefore she was always shamming love and friendship and benevolence and tenderness. She could tell you, with words most appropriate to the subject, how horrible were all shams, and in saying so would be not altogether insincere. Yet she knew that she herself was ever shamming, and she satisfied herself with shams. "What is he going to say to me?"

she asked Augusta, with her hands clasped, when she went up to put her bonnet on after breakfast.

"To fix the day, I suppose," said Augusta.

"If I thought so, I would endeavour to please him. But it is n't that. I know his manner so well! I am sure it is not that. Perhaps it is something about my boy. He will not wish to separate a mother from her child."

"Oh dear, no," said Augusta. "I am sure Frederic will not want to do that."

"In anything else I will obey him," said Lizzie, again clasping her hands. "But I must not keep him waiting, must I? I fear my future lord is somewhat impatient." Now, if among Lord Fawn's merits one merit was more conspicuous than another, it was that of patience. When Lizzie descended, he was waiting for her in the hall without a thought that he was being kept too long. "Now, Frederic! I should have been with you two whole minutes since, if I had not had just a word to say to Augusta. I do so love Augusta."

"She is a very good girl," said Lord Fawn.

"So true and genuine, and so full of spirit. I will come on the other side because of my parasol and the sun. There, that will do. We have an hour nearly before going to church; have n't we? I suppose you will go to church."

"I intend it," said Lord Fawn.

"It is so nice to go to church," said Lizzie. Since her widowhood had commenced she had compromised matters with the world. One Sunday she would go to church and the next she would have a headache and a French novel and stay in bed. But she was prepared

for stricter conduct during at least the first months of her newly-married life.

"My dear Lizzie," began Lord Fawn, "since I last saw you I have been twice with Mr. Camperdown."

"You are not going to talk about Mr. Camperdown to-day?"

"Well; yes. I could not do so last night, and I shall be back in London either to-night or before you are up to-morrow morning."

"I hate the very name of Mr. Camperdown," said Lizzie.

"I am sorry for that, because I am sure you could not find an honester lawyer to manage your affairs for you. He does everything for me, and so he did for Sir Florian Eustace."

"That is just the reason why I employ some one else," she answered.

"Very well. I am not going to say a word about that. I may regret it, but I am, just at present, the last person in the world to urge you upon that subject. What I want to say is this. You must restore those diamonds."

"To whom shall I restore them?"

"To Mr. Garnett the silversmith, if you please, or to Mr. Camperdown; or, if you like it better, to your brother-in-law, Mr. John Eustace."

"And why am I to give up my own property?"

Lord Fawn paused for some seconds before he replied. "To satisfy my honour," he then said. As she made him no immediate answer he continued. "It would not suit my views that my wife should be seen wearing the jewels of the Eustace family."

"I don't want to wear them," said Lizzie.

"Then why should you desire to keep them?"

"Because they are my own. Because I do not choose to be put upon. Because I will not allow such a cunning old snake as Mr. Camperdown to rob me of my property. They are my own, and you should defend my right to them."

"Do you mean to say that you will not oblige me by doing what I ask you?"

"I will not be robbed of what is my own," said Lizzie.

"Then I must declare"—and now Lord Fawn spoke very slowly—"then I must declare that under these circumstances, let the consequences be what they may, I must retreat from the enviable position which your favour has given me." The words were cold and solemn, and were ill-spoken; but they were deliberate, and had been indeed actually learned by heart.

"What do you mean?" said Lizzie, flashing round upon him.

"I mean what I say, exactly. But perhaps it may be well that I should explain my motives more clearly."

"I don't know anything about motives, and I don't care anything about motives. Do you mean to tell me that you have come here to threaten me with deserting me?"

"You had better hear me."

"I don't choose to hear a word more after what you have said, unless it be in the way of an apology, or retracting your most injurious accusation."

"I have said nothing to retract," said Lord Fawn solemnly.

"Then I will not hear another word from you. I have friends and you shall see them."

Lord Fawn, who had thought a great deal upon the subject, and had well understood that this interview would be for him one of great difficulty, was very anxious to induce her to listen to a few further words of explanation. "Dear Lizzie," he began.

"I will not be addressed, sir, in that way by a man who is treating me as you are doing," she said.

"But I want you to understand me."

"Understand you! You understand nothing yourself that a man ought to understand. I wonder that you have the courage to be so insolent. If you knew what you were doing, you would not have the spirit to do it."

Her words did not quite come home to him, and much of her scorn was lost upon him. He was now chiefly anxious to explain to her that though he must abide by the threat he had made, he was quite willing to go on with his engagement if she would oblige him in the matter of the diamonds. "It was necessary that I should explain to you that I could not allow that necklace to be brought into my house."

"No one thought of taking it to your house."

"What were you to do with it, then?"

"Keep it in my own," said Lizzie stoutly. They were still walking together, and were now altogether out of sight of the house. Lizzie in her excitement had forgotten church, had forgotten the Fawn women — had forgotten everything except the battle which it was necessary that she should fight for herself. She did not mean to allow the marriage to be broken off, but she meant to retain the necklace. The manner in which Lord Fawn had demanded its restitution — in which there had been none of that mock tenderness by which she might have permitted herself to be per-

suaded — had made her, at any rate for the moment, as firm as steel on this point. It was inconceivable to her that he should think himself at liberty to go back from his promise because she would not render up property which was in her possession, and which no one could prove not to be legally her own! She walked on full of fierce courage, despising him, but determined that she would marry him.

"I am afraid we do not understand each other," he said at last.

"Certainly I do not understand you, sir."

"Will you allow my mother to speak to you on the subject?"

"No. If I told your mother to give up her diamonds, what would she say?"

"But they are not yours, Lady Eustace, unless you will submit that question to an arbitrator."

"I will submit nothing to anybody. You have no right to speak on such a subject till after we are married."

"I must have it settled first, Lady Eustace."

"Then, Lord Fawn, you won't have it settled first. Or rather it is settled already. I shall keep my own necklace, and Mr. Camperdown may do anything he pleases. As for you, if you ill-treat me, I shall know where to go to."

They had now come out from the shrubbery upon the lawn, and there was the carriage at the door, ready to take the elders of the family to church. Of course in such a condition of affairs it would be understood that Lizzie was one of the elders.

"I shall not go to church now," she said, as she advanced across the lawn toward the hall door. "You

will be pleased, Lord Fawn, to let your mother know that I am detained. I do not suppose that you will dare to tell her why." Then she sailed round at the back of the carriage and entered the hall, in which several of the girls were standing. Among them was Augusta, waiting to take her seat among the elders; but Lizzie passed on through them all, without a word, and marched up to her bedroom.

"Oh, Frederic, what is the matter?" said Augusta, as soon as her brother entered the house.

"Never mind. Nothing is the matter. You had better go to church. Where is my mother?"

At this moment Lady Fawn appeared at the bottom of the stairs, having passed Lizzie as she was coming down. Not a syllable had then been spoken, but Lady Fawn at once knew that much was wrong. Her son went up to her and whispered a word in her ear. "Oh, certainly," she said, desisting from the operation of pulling on her gloves. "Augusta, neither your brother nor I will go to church."

"Nor — Lady Eustace?"

"It seems not," said Lady Fawn.

"Lady Eustace will not go to church," said Lord Fawn.

"And where is Lucy?" asked Lydia.

"She will not go to church either," said Lady Fawn. "I have just been with her."

"Nobody is going to church," said Nina. "All the same, I shall go myself."

"Augusta, my dear, you and the girls had better go. You can take the carriage of course." But Augusta and the girls chose to walk, and the carriage was sent round into the yard.

"There 's a rumpus already between my lord and the young missus," said the coachman to the groom; for the coachman had seen the way in which Lady Eustace had returned to the house. And there certainly was a rumpus. During the whole morning Lord Fawn was closeted with his mother, and then he went away to London without saying a word to any one of the family. But he left this note for Lady Eustace:

"DEAREST LIZZIE: Think well of what I have said to you. It is not that I desire to break off our engagement; but that I cannot allow my wife to keep the diamonds which belong of right to her late husband's family. You may be sure that I should not be thus urgent had I not taken steps to ascertain that I am right in my judgment. In the mean time you had better consult my mother.

"Yours affectionately,

"FAWN."

CHAPTER XV.

"I 'LL GIVE YOU A HUNDRED-GUINEA BROOCH."

THERE had been another "affair" in the house that morning, though of a nature very different to the "rumpus" which had occurred between Lord Fawn and Lady Eustace. Lady Fawn had been closeted with Lucy, and had expressed her opinion of the impropriety of Frank Greystock's visit. "I suppose he came to see his cousin," said Lady Fawn, anxious to begin with some apology for such conduct.

"I cannot tell," said Lucy. "Perhaps he did. I think he said so. I think he cared more to see me." Then Lady Fawn was obliged to express her opinion, and she did so, uttering many words of wisdom. Frank Greystock, had he intended to sacrifice his prospects by a disinterested marriage, would have spoken out before now. He was old enough to have made up his mind on such a subject, and he had not spoken out. He did not mean marriage. That was quite evident to Lady Fawn; and her dear Lucy was revelling in hopes which would make her miserable. If Lucy could only have known of the letter, which was already her own property though lying in the pillar letter-box in Fleet street, and which had not already been sent down and delivered simply because it was Sunday morning! But she was very brave. "He does love me," she said. "He told me so."

"Oh, Lucy, that is worse and worse. A man to tell you that he loves you, and yet not ask you to be his wife!"

"I am contented," said Lucy. That assertion, however, could hardly have been true.

"Contented! And did you tell him that you returned his love?"

"He knew it without my telling him," said Lucy. It was so hard upon her that she should be so interrogated while that letter was lying in the iron box!

"Dear Lucy, this must not be," said Lady Fawn. "You are preparing for yourself inexpressible misery."

"I have done nothing wrong, Lady Fawn."

"No, my dear — no. I do not say you have been wrong. But I think he is wrong — so wrong! I call it wicked. I do indeed. For your own sake you should endeavour to forget him."

"I will never forget him," said Lucy. "To think of him is everything to me. He told me I was his Queen, and he shall be my King. I will be loyal to him always." To poor Lady Fawn this was very dreadful. The girl persisted in declaring her love for the man, and yet did not even pretend to think that the man meant to marry her! And this, too, was Lucy Morris — of whom Lady Fawn was accustomed to say to her intimate friends that she had altogether ceased to look upon her as a governess. "Just one of ourselves, Mrs. Winslow, and almost as dear as one of my own girls!" Thus, in the warmth of her heart, she had described Lucy to a neighbour within the last week. Many more words of wisdom she spoke, and then she left poor Lucy in no mood for church. Would she have been

in a better mood for the morning service had she known of the letter in the iron post?

Then Lady Fawn had put on her bonnet and gone down into the hall, and the "rumpus" had come. After that, everybody in the house knew that all things were astray. When the girls came home from church their brother was gone. Half an hour before dinner Lady Fawn sent the note up to Lizzie, with a message to say that they would dine at three — it being Sunday. Lizzie sent down word that as she was unwell she would ask to have just a cup of tea and "something" sent to her own room. If Lady Fawn would allow her, she would remain up-stairs with her child. She always made use of her child when troubles came.

The afternoon was very sad and dreary. Lady Fawn had an interview with Lady Eustace, but Lizzie altogether refused to listen to any advice on the subject of the necklace. "It is an affair," she said haughtily, "in which I must judge for myself — or with the advice of my own particular friends. Had Lord Fawn waited until we were married; then indeed ——!"

"But that would have been too late," said Lady Fawn severely.

"He is, at any rate, premature now in laying his commands upon me," said Lizzie. Lady Fawn, who was perhaps more anxious that the marriage should be broken off than that the jewels should be restored, then withdrew; and as she left the room Lizzie clasped her boy to her bosom. "He, at any rate, is left to me," she said. Lucy and the Fawn girls went to evening church, and afterward Lizzie came down among them when they were at tea. Before she went to bed Lizzie declared her intention of returning to her own house

in Mount street on the following day. To this Lady Fawn of course made no objection.

On the next morning there came an event which robbed Lizzie's departure of some of the importance which might otherwise have been attached to it. The post-office, with that accuracy in the performance of its duties for which it is conspicuous among all offices, caused Lucy's letter to be delivered to her while the members of the family were sitting round the breakfast table. Lizzie, indeed, was not there. She had expressed her intention of breakfasting in her own room, and had requested that a conveyance might be ready to take her to the 11 : 30 train. Augusta had been with her, asking whether anything could be done for her. "I care for nothing now, except my child," Lizzie had replied. As the nurse and the lady's maid were both in the room, Augusta, of course, could say nothing further. That occurred after prayers, and while the tea was being made. When Augusta reached the breakfast-room Lucy was cutting up the loaf of bread, and at the same moment the old butler was placing a letter immediately under her eyes. She saw the handwriting and recognised it, but yet she finished cutting the bread. "Lucy, do give me that hunchy bit," said Nina.

"Hunchy is not in the dictionary," said Cecilia.

"I want it in my plate, and not in the dictionary," said Nina.

Lucy did as she was asked, but her hand trembled as she gave the hunch, and Lady Fawn saw that her face was crimson. She took the letter and broke the envelope, and as she drew out the sheet of paper she looked up at Lady Fawn. The fate of her whole life

was in her hands, and there she was standing with all their eyes fixed upon her. She did not even know how to sit down, but, still standing, she read the first and last words, "Dear, dear Lucy," — "Yours ever and always, if you will have me, F. G." She did not want to read any more of it then. She sat down slowly, put the precious paper back into its envelope, looked round upon them all, and knew that she was crimson to the roots of her hair, blushing like a guilty thing.

"Lucy, my dear," said Lady Fawn — and Lucy at once turned her face full upon her old friend — "you have got a letter that agitates you."

"Yes, I have," she said.

"Go into the book-room. You can come back to breakfast when you have read it, you know." Thereupon Lucy rose from her seat, and retired with her treasure into the book-room. But even when she was there she could not at once read her letter. When the door was closed and she knew that she was alone she looked at it, and then clasped it tight between her hands. She was almost afraid to read it lest the letter itself should contradict the promise which the last words of it had seemed to convey to her. She went up to the window and stood there gazing out upon the gravel road, with her hand containing the letter pressed upon her heart. Lady Fawn had told her that she was preparing for herself inexpressible misery; and now there had come to her joy so absolutely inexpressible! "A man to tell you that he loves you, and yet not ask you to be his wife!" She repeated to herself Lady Fawn's words, and then those other words, "Yours ever and always, if you will have me!" Have him, indeed!

She threw from her, at once, as vain and wicked and false, all idea of coying her love. She would leap at his neck if he were there, and tell him that for years he had been almost her god. And of course he knew it. "If I will have him! Traitor!" she said to herself, smiling through her tears. Then she reflected that after all it would be well that she should read the letter. There might be conditions; though what conditions could he propose with which she would not comply? However, she seated herself in a corner of the room and did read the letter. As she read it, she hardly understood it all; but she understood what she wanted to understand. He asked her to share with him his home. He had spoken to her that day without forethought; but must n't such speech be the truest and the sweetest of all speeches? "And now I write to you to ask you to be my wife." Oh, how wrong some people can be in their judgments! How wrong Lady Fawn had been in hers about Frank Greystock! "For the last year or two I have lived with this hope before me." "And so have I," said Lucy. "And so have I; with that and no other." "Too great confidence! Traitor," she said again, smiling and weeping, "yes, traitor; when of course you knew it." "Is his happiness in my hands? Oh, then he shall be happy." "Of course I will tell Lady Fawn at once — instantly. Dear Lady Fawn! But yet she has been so wrong. I suppose she will let him come here. But what does it matter, now that I know it? 'Yours ever and always, if you will have me. F. G.' Traitor, traitor, traitor!" Then she got up and walked about the room, not knowing what she did, holding the letter now between her hands, and then pressing it to her lips.

She was still walking about the room when there came a low tap at the door, and Lady Fawn entered. "There is nothing the matter, Lucy?" Lucy stood stock still, with her treasure still clasped, smiling, almost laughing, while the tears ran down her cheeks. "Won't you eat your breakfast, my dear?" said Lady Fawn.

"Oh, Lady Fawn! oh, Lady Fawn!" said Lucy, rushing into her friend's arms.

"What is it, Lucy? I think our little wise one has lost her wits."

"Oh, Lady Fawn, he has asked me!"

"Is it Mr. Greystock?"

"Yes; Mr. Greystock. He has asked me. He has asked me to be his wife. I thought he loved me. I hoped he did at least. Oh dear, I did so hope it. And he does."

"Has he proposed to you?"

"Yes, Lady Fawn. I told you what he said to me. And then he went and wrote this. Is he not noble and good, and so kind? You shall read it, but you 'll give it me back, Lady Fawn?"

"Certainly I 'll give it you back. You don't think I 'd rob you of your lover's letter?"

"Perhaps you might think it right."

"If it is really an offer of marriage ——," said Lady Fawn very seriously.

"It could n't be more of an offer if he had sat writing it for ever," said Lucy as she gave up her letter with confidence. Lady Fawn read it with leisurely attention, and smiled as she put the paper back into the envelope. "All the men in the world could n't say it more plainly," said Lucy, nodding her head forward.

"I don't think they could," said Lady Fawn. "I never read anything plainer in my life. I wish you joy with all my heart, Lucy. There is not a word to be said against him."

"Against him!" said Lucy, who thought that this was very insufficient praise.

"What I mean is that when I objected to his coming here I was only afraid that he could n't afford, or would think, you know, that in his position he could n't afford to marry a wife without a fortune."

"He may come now, Lady Fawn?"

"Well, yes; I think so. I shall be glad just to say a word to him. Of course you are in my hands, and I do love you so dearly, Lucy! I could not bear that anything but good should happen to you."

"This is good," said Lucy.

"It won't be good, and Mr. Greystock won't think you good, if you don't come and eat your breakfast." So Lucy was led back into the parlour, and sipped her tea and crunched her toast, while Lydia came and stood over her.

"Of course it is from him," whispered Lydia. Lucy again nodded her head while she was crunching her toast.

The fact that Mr. Greystock had proposed in form to Lucy Morris was soon known to all the family, and the news certainly did take away something from the importance which would otherwise have been attached to Lizzie's departure. There was not the same awe of the ceremony, the same dread of some scene, which, but for Frank Greystock's letter, would have existed. Of course Lord Fawn's future matrimonial prospects were to them all an affair of more moment than those of

Lucy; but Lord Fawn himself had gone, and had already quarrelled with the lady before he went. There was at present nothing more to be done by them in regard to Lizzie than just to get rid of her. But Lucy's good fortune, so unexpected, and by her so frankly owned as the very best fortune in the world that could have befallen her, gave an excitement to them all. There could be no lessons that morning for Nina, and the usual studies of the family were altogether interrupted. Lady Fawn purred, and congratulated, and gave good advice, and declared that any other home for Lucy before her marriage would now be quite out of the question. "Of course it would n't do for you to go, even to Clara," said Lady Fawn, who seemed to think that there still might be some delay before Frank Greystock would be ready for his wife. "You know, my dear, that he is n't rich; not for a member of Parliament. I suppose he makes a good income, but I have always heard that he was a little backward when he began. Of course, you know, nobody need be in a hurry." Then Lucy began to think that if Frank should wish to postpone his marriage, say for three or four years, she might even yet become a burden on her friend. "But don't you be frightened," continued Lady Fawn; "you shall never want a home as long as I have one to give you. We shall soon find out what are Mr. Greystock's ideas; and unless he is very unreasonable we 'll make things fit."

Then there came a message to Lucy from Lady Eustace. "If you please, Miss, Lady Eustace will be glad to see you for a minute up in her room before she starts." So Lucy was torn away from

the thoughts of her own happiness, and taken upstairs to Lady Eustace. "You have heard that I am going?" said Lizzie.

"Yes; I heard you were to go this morning."

"And you have heard why? I 'm sure you will not deceive me, Lucy. Where am I to look for truth, if not to an old, old friend like you?"

"Why should I deceive you, Lizzie?"

"Why, indeed? only that all people do. The world is so false, so material, so worldly! One gives out one's heart and gets in return nothing but dust and ashes — nothing but ashes and dust. Oh, I have been so disappointed in Lady Fawn."

"You know she is my dearest friend," said Lucy.

"Pshaw! I know that you have worked for her like a slave, and that she has paid you a bare pittance."

"She has been more like a mother to me than anything else," said Lucy angrily.

"Because you have been tame. It does not suit me to be tame. It is not my plan to be tame. Have you heard the cause of the disagreement between Lord Fawn and me?"

"Well — no."

"Tell the truth, Lucy."

"How dare you tell me to tell the truth? Of course I tell the truth. I believe it is something about some property which he wants you to give back to somebody; but I don't know any more."

"Yes, my dear husband, Sir Florian, who understood me — whom I idolised — who seemed to have been made for me — gave me a present. Lord Fawn is pleased to say that he does not approve of my keeping any gift from my late lord. Considering that he

intends to live upon the wealth which Sir Florian was generous enough to bestow upon me, this does seem to be strange! Of course I resented such interference. Would not you have resented it?"

"I don't know," said Lucy, who thought that she could bring herself to comply with any request made to her by Frank Greystock.

"Any woman who had a spark of spirit would resent it, and I have resented it. I have told Lord Fawn that I will on no account part with the rich presents which my adored Florian showered upon me in his generosity. It is not for their richness that I keep them, but because they are, for his sake, so inexpressively dear to me. If Lord Fawn chooses to be jealous of a necklace, he must be jealous." Lucy, who had in truth heard but a small fragment of the story — just so much of it as Lydia had learned from the discreet Amelia, who herself had but a very hazy idea of the facts — did not quite know how much of the tale, as it was now told to her, might be true and how much false. After a certain fashion she and Lizzie Eustace called themselves friends. But she did not believe her friend to be honest, and was aware that in some matters her friend would condescend — to fib. Lizzie's poetry, and romance, and high feelings had never had the ring of true soundness in Lucy's ears. But her imagination was not strong enough to soar to the altitude of the lies which Lizzie was now telling. She did believe that the property which Lizzie was called upon to restore was held to be objectionable by Lord Fawn simply because it had reached Lizzie from the hands of her late husband. "What do you think of such conduct as that?" asked Lady Eustace.

"Won't it do if you lock them up instead of wearing them?" asked Lucy.

"I have never dreamed of wearing them."

"I don't understand about such things," said Lucy, determined not to impute any blame to one of the Fawn family.

"It is tyranny, sheer tyranny," continued the other, "and he will find that I am not the woman to yield to it. No. For love I could give up everything—but nothing from fear. He has told me in so many words that he does not intend to go on with his engagement!"

"Has he indeed?"

"But I intend that he shall. If he thinks that I am going to be thrown over because he takes ideas of that kind into his head, he 's mistaken. He shall know that I 'm not to be made a plaything of like that. I 'll tell you what you can do for me, Lucy."

"What can I do for you?"

"There is no one in the world I trust more thoroughly than I do you," said Lizzie, "and hardly any one that I love so well. Think how long we have known each other! And you may be sure of this: I always have been, and always will be, your friend with my cousin Frank."

"I don't want anything of that kind," said Lucy, "and never did."

"Nobody has so much influence with Frank as I. Just do you write to me to-morrow, and the next day, and the day after, a mere line, you know, to tell me how the land lies here."

"There will be nothing to tell."

"Yes, there will — ever so much. They will be

talking about me every hour. If you 'll be true to me, Lucy, in this business, I 'll make you the handsomest present you ever saw in your life. I 'll give you a hundred-guinea brooch; I will, indeed. You shall have the money and buy it yourself."

"A what!" said Lucy.

"A hundred guineas to do what you please with!"

"You mean thing!" said Lucy. "I did n't think there was a woman so mean as that in the world. I 'm not surprised now at Lord Fawn. Pick up what I hear and send it you in letters, and then be paid money for it!"

"Why not? It 's all to do good."

"How can you have thought to ask me to do such a thing? How can you bring yourself to think so badly of people? I 'd sooner cut my hand off; and as for you, Lizzie, I think you are mean and wicked to conceive such a thing. And now good-by." So saying, she left the room, giving her dear friend no time for further argument.

Lady Eustace got away that morning, not in time, indeed, for the 11:30 train, but at such an hour as to make it unnecessary that she should appear at the early dinner. The saying of farewell was very cold and ceremonious. Of course there was no word as to any future visit — no word as to any future events whatever. They all shook hands with her, and special injunctions were given to the coachman to drive her safely to the station. At this ceremony Lucy was not present. Lydia had asked her to come down and say good-by; but Lucy refused. "I saw her in her own room," said Lucy.

"And was it all very affectionate?" Lydia asked.

"Well, no; it was not affectionate at all." This was all that Lucy said, and thus Lady Eustace completed her visit to Fawn Court.

The letters were taken away for the post at eight o'clock in the evening, and before that time it was necessary that Lucy should write to her lover. "Lady Fawn," she said in a whisper, "may I tell him to come here?"

"Certainly, my dear. You had better tell him to call on me. Of course he'll see you, too, when he comes."

"I think he'd want to see me," said Lucy, "and I'm sure I should want to see him." Then she wrote her answer to Frank's letter. She allowed herself an hour for the happy task; but, though the letter when written was short, the hour hardly sufficed for the writing of it.

"DEAR MR. GREYSTOCK;" — there was matter for her of great consideration before she could get even so far as this; but after biting her pen for ten minutes, during which she pictured to herself how pleasant it would be to call him Frank when he should have told her to do so, and had found, upon repeated whispered trials, that of all names it was the pleasantest to pronounce, she decided upon refraining from writing it now — "Lady Fawn has seen your letter to me — the dearest letter that ever was written — and she says that you may call upon *her*. But you must n't go away without seeing *me too*." Then there was great difficulty as to the words to be used by her for the actual rendering herself up to him as his future wife. At last the somewhat too Spartan simplicity of her nature prevailed, and the words were written very plain, and very short.

"I love you better than all the world, and I will be your wife. It shall be the happiness of my life to try to deserve you.

"I am, with all my heart,

"Most affectionately your own

"LUCY."

When it was written it did not content her. But the hour was over, and the letters must go. "I suppose it 'll do," she said to herself. "He 'll know what it means." And so the letter was sent.

CHAPTER XVI.

CERTAINLY AN HEIRLOOM.

THE burden of his position was so heavy on Lord Fawn's mind that, on the Monday morning after leaving Fawn Court, he was hardly as true to the affairs of India as he himself would have wished. He was resolved to do what was right — if only he could find out what would be the right thing in his present difficulty. Not to break his word, not to be unjust, not to deviate by a hair's breadth from that line of conduct which would be described as "honourable" in the circle to which he belonged; not to give his political enemies an opportunity for calumny — this was all in all to him. The young widow was very lovely and very rich, and it would have suited him well to marry her. It would still suit him well to do so, if she would make herself amenable to reason and the laws. He had assured himself that he was very much in love with her, and had already, in his imagination, received the distinguished heads of his party at Portray Castle. But he would give all this up — love, income, beauty, and castle — without a doubt, rather than find himself in the mess of having married a wife who had stolen a necklace, and who would not make restitution. He might marry her, and insist on giving it up afterward; but he foresaw terrible difficulties in the way of such an arrange-

ment. Lady Eustace was self-willed, and had already told him that she did not intend to keep the jewels in his house — but in her own! What should he do, so that no human being — not the most bigoted Tory that ever expressed scorn for a Whig lord — should be able to say that he had done wrong? He was engaged to the lady, and could not simply change his mind and give no reason. He believed in Mr. Camperdown; but he could hardly plead that belief, should he hereafter be accused of heartless misconduct. For aught he knew Lady Eustace might bring an action against him for breach of promise, and obtain a verdict and damages, and annihilate him as an Under-Secretary. How should he keep his hands quite clean?

Frank Greystock was, as far as he knew, Lizzie's nearest relative in London. The dean was her uncle, but then the dean was down at Bobsborough. It might be necessary for him to go down to Bobsborough; but in the mean time he would see Frank Greystock. Greystock was as bitter a Tory as any in England. Greystock was the very man who had attacked him, Lord Fawn, in the House of Commons respecting the Sawab — making the attack quite personal — and that without a shadow of a cause! Within the short straight grooves of Lord Fawn's intellect the remembrance of this supposed wrong was always running up and down, renewing its own soreness. He regarded Greystock as an enemy who would lose no opportunity of injuring him. In his weakness and littleness he was quite unable to judge of other men by himself. He would not go a hair's breadth astray, if he knew it; but because Greystock had, in debate, called him timid and tyrannical, he believed that Greystock would stop short of nothing

that might injure him. And yet he must appeal to Greystock. He did appeal, and in answer to his appeal Frank came to him at the India House. But Frank, before he saw Lord Fawn, had, as was fitting, been with his cousin.

Nothing was decided at this interview. Lord Fawn became more than ever convinced that the member for Bobsborough was his determined enemy, and Frank was more convinced than ever that Lord Fawn was an empty, stiff-necked, self-sufficient prig.

Greystock, of course, took his cousin's part. He was there to do so; and he himself did not really know whether Lizzie was or was not entitled to the diamonds. The lie which she had first fabricated for the benefit of Mr. Benjamin when she had the jewels valued, and which she had since told with different degrees of precision to various people — to Lady Linlithgow, to Mr. Camperdown, to Lucy, and to Lord Fawn — she now repeated with increased precision to her cousin. Sir Florian, in putting the trinket into her hands, had explained to her that it was very valuable, and that she was to regard it as her own peculiar property. "If it was an heirloom he could n't do it," Frank had said, with all the confidence of a practising barrister.

"He made it over as an heirloom to me," said Lizzie, with plaintive tenderness.

"That 's nonsense, dear Lizzie." Then she smiled sweetly on him, and patted the back of his hand with hers. She was very gentle with him, and bore his assumed superiority with pretty meekness. "He could not make it over as an heirloom to you. If it was his to give, he could give it to you."

"It was his — certainly."

"That is just what I cannot tell as yet, and what must be found out. If the diamonds formed part of an heirloom — and there is evidence that it is so — you must give them up. Sir Florian could only give away what was his own to give."

"But Lord Fawn had no right to dictate."

"Certainly not," said Frank; and then he made a promise, which he knew to be rash, that he would stand by his pretty cousin in this affair. "I don't see why you should assume that Lady Eustace is keeping property that does n't belong to her," he said to Lord Fawn.

"I go by what Camperdown tells me," said Lord Fawn.

"Mr. Camperdown is a very excellent attorney, and a most respectable man," said Greystock. "I have nothing on earth to say against Mr. Camperdown. But Mr. Camperdown is n't the law and the prophets, nor yet can we allow him to be judge and jury in such a case as this."

"Surely, Mr. Greystock, you would n't wish it to go before a jury."

"You don't understand me, Lord Fawn. If any claim be really made for these jewels by Mr. John Eustace on the part of the heir, or on behalf of the estate, a statement had better be submitted to counsel. The family deeds must be inspected, and no doubt counsel would agree in telling my cousin, Lady Eustace, what she should or what she should not do. In the mean time, I understand that you are engaged to marry her."

"I was engaged to her certainly," said Lord Fawn.

"You can hardly mean to assert, my lord, that you

intend to be untrue to your promise, and to throw over your own engagement because my cousin has expressed her wish to retain property which she believes to be her own!" This was said in a tone which made Lord Fawn surer than ever that Greystock was his enemy to the knife. Personally, he was not a coward; and he knew enough of the world to be quite sure that Greystock would not attempt any personal encounter. But morally, Lord Fawn was a coward, and he did fear that the man before him would work him some bitter injury. "You cannot mean that," continued Frank, "and you will probably allow me to assure my cousin that she misunderstood you in the matter."

"I 'd sooner see Mr. Camperdown again before I say anything."

"I cannot understand, Lord Fawn, that a gentleman should require an attorney to tell him what to do in such a case as this." They were standing now, and Lord Fawn's countenance was heavy, troubled, and full of doubt. He said nothing, and was probably altogether unaware how eloquent was his face. "My cousin, Lady Eustace," continued Frank, "must not be kept in this suspense. I agree on her behalf that her title to these trinkets must be made the subject of inquiry by persons adequate to form a judgment. Of course, I, as her relative, shall take no part in that inquiry. But as her relative, I must demand from you an admission that your engagement with her cannot in any way be allowed to depend on the fate of those jewels. She has chosen to accept you as her future husband, and I am bound to see that she is treated with good faith, honour, and fair observance."

Frank made his demand very well, while Lord Fawn

was looking like a whipped dog. "Of course," said his lordship, "all I want is, that the right thing should be done."

"The right thing will be done. My cousin wishes to keep nothing that is not her own. I may tell her, then, that she will receive from you an assurance that you have had no intention of departing from your word." After this, Lord Fawn made some attempt at a stipulation that this assurance to Lizzie was to be founded on the counter-assurance given to him that the matter of the diamonds should be decided by proper legal authority; but Frank would not submit to this, and at last the Under-Secretary yielded. The engagement was to remain in force. Counsel were to be employed. The two lovers were not to see each other just at present. And when the matter had been decided by the lawyers, Lord Fawn was to express his regret for having suspected his lady-love! That was the verbal agreement, according Frank Greystock's view of it. Lord Fawn, no doubt, would have declared that he had never consented to the latter stipulation.

About a week after this there was a meeting at Mr. Camperdown's chambers. Greystock, as his cousin's friend, attended to hear what Mr. Camperdown had to say in the presence of Lord Fawn and John Eustace. He, Frank, had in the mean time been down to Richmond, had taken Lucy to his arms as his future bride, and had been closeted with Lady Fawn. As a man who was doing his duty by Lucy Morris, he was welcomed and made much of by her ladyship; but it had been impossible to leave Lizzie's name altogether unmentioned, and Frank had spoken as the champion of

his cousin. Of course there had arisen something of ill-feeling between the two. Lady Fawn had taught herself to hate Lizzie, and was desirous that the match should be over, diamonds or no diamonds. She could not quite say this to her visitor, but she showed her feeling very plainly. Frank was courteous, cold, and resolute in presuming, or pretending to presume, that as a matter of course the marriage would take place. Lady Fawn intended to be civil, but she could not restrain her feeling; and though she did not dare to say that her son would have nothing more to do with Lizzie Eustace, she showed very plainly that she intended to work with that object. Of course the two did not part as cordial friends, and of course poor Lucy perceived that it was so.

Before the meeting took place, Mr. Camperdown had been at work looking over old deeds. It is undoubtedly the case that things often become complicated which, from the greatness of their importance, should have been kept clear as running water. The diamonds in question had been bought with other jewels, by Sir Florian's grandfather, on the occasion of his marriage with the daughter of a certain duke, on which occasion old family jewels, which were said to have been heirlooms, were sold or given in exchange as part value for those then purchased. This grandfather, who had also been Sir Florian in his time, had expressly stated in his will that these jewels were to be regarded as an heirloom in the family, and had as such left them to his eldest son, and to that son's eldest son, should such a child be born. His eldest son had possessed them, but not that son's son. There was such a Eustace born, but he had died before his father.

The younger son of that old Sir Florian had then succeeded as Sir Thomas, and he was the father of that Florian who had married Lizzie Eustace. That last Sir Florian had therefore been the fourth in succession from the old Sir Florian by whom the will had been made, and who had directed that these jewels should be regarded as heirlooms in the family. The two intermediate baronets had made no allusion to the diamonds in any deeds executed by them. Indeed, Sir Florian's father had died without a will. There were other jewels, larger but much less valuable than the diamonds, still in the hands of the Messrs. Garnett, as to which no question was raised. The late Sir Florian had, by his will, left all the property in his house at Portray to his widow, but all property elsewhere to his heir. This was what Mr. Camperdown had at last learned, but he had been forced to admit to himself, while learning this, that there was confusion.

He was confident enough, however, that there was no difficulty in the matter. The Messrs. Garnett were able to say that the necklace had been in their keeping, with various other jewels still in their possession, from the time of the death of the late Lady Eustace, up to the marriage of the late Sir Florian, her son. They stated the date on which the jewels were given up to be the 24th of September, which was the day after Sir Florian's return from Scotland with his bride. Lizzie's first statement had coincided with this entry in the Messrs. Garnett's books; but latterly she had asserted that the necklace had been given to her in Scotland. When Mr. Camperdown examined the entry himself in the jeweller's book, he found the figures to be so blotted that they might represent either the 4th or 24th September.

Now, the 4th September had been the day preceding Sir Florian's marriage. John Eustace only knew that he had seen the necklace worn in Scotland by his mother. The bishop only knew that he had often seen them on the neck of his sister-in-law when, as was very often the case, she appeared in full-blown society. Mr. Camperdown believed that he had traced two stories to Lizzie — one, repeated more than once, that the diamonds had been given to her in London, and a second, made to himself, that they had been given to her at Portray. He himself believed that they had never been in Scotland since the death of the former Lady Eustace; but he was quite confident that he could trust altogether to the disposition made of them by the old Sir Florian. There could be no doubt as to these being the diamonds there described, although the setting had been altered. Old Mr. Garnett stated that he would swear to them if he saw the necklace.

"You cannot suppose that Lady Eustace wishes to keep anything that is not her own," said Frank Greystock.

"Of course not," said John Eustace.

"Nobody imagines it," said Mr. Camperdown. Lord Fawn, who felt that he ought not to be there, and who did not know whether he might with a better grace take Lizzie's part or a part against her, said nothing. "But," continued Mr. Camperdown, "there is luckily no doubt as to the facts. The diamonds in question formed a part of a set of most valuable ornaments settled in the family by Sir Florian Eustace in 1799. The deed was drawn up by my grandfather, and is now here. I do not know how we are to have

further proof. Will you look at the deed, Mr. Greystock, and at the will?" Frank suggested that as it might probably be expedient to take advice on the subject professionally, he had rather not look at the deed. Anything which he might say, on looking at the document now, could have no weight. "But why should any advice be necessary," said Mr. Camperdown, "when the matter is so clear?"

"My dear sir," said Frank, "my cousin, Lady Eustace, is strong in her confidence that her late husband intended to give them to her as her own, and that he would not have done this without the power of doing so." Now Mr. Camperdown was quite sure that Lizzie was lying in this, and could therefore make no adequate answer. "Your experience must probably have told you," continued Frank, "that there is considerable difficulty in dealing with the matter of heirlooms."

"I never heard of any such difficulty," said Mr. Camperdown.

"People generally understand it all so clearly," said Lord Fawn.

"The late Sir Florian does not appear to have understood it very clearly," said Frank.

"Let her put them into the hands of any indifferent person or firm till the matter is decided," said Mr. Camperdown. "They will be much safer so than in her keeping."

"I think they are quite safe," said Frank.

And this was all that took place at that meeting. As Mr. Camperdown said to John Eustace, it was manifest enough that she meant "to hang on to them." "I only hope Lord Fawn will not be fool enough to marry her,"

said Mr. Camperdown. Lord Fawn himself was of the same way of thinking; but then how was he to clear his character of the charge which would be brought against him; and how was he to stand his ground before Frank Greystock?

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DIAMONDS ARE SEEN IN PUBLIC.

Let it not be supposed that Lady Eustace during these summer weeks was living the life of a recluse. The London season was in its full splendour, and she was by no means a recluse. During the first year of her widowhood she had been every inch a widow, as far as crape would go, and a quiet life either at Bobsborough or Portray Castle. During this year her child was born, and she was in every way thrown upon her good behaviour, living with bishops' wives and deans' daughters. Two years of retreat from the world is generally thought to be the proper thing for a widow. Lizzie had not quite accomplished her two years before she reopened the campaign in Mount street with very small remnants of weeds, and with her crape brought down to a minimum; but she was young and rich, and the world is aware that a woman of twenty-two can hardly afford to sacrifice two whole years. In the matter of her widowhood Lizzie did not encounter very much reproach. She was not shunned, or so ill spoken of as to have a widely-spread bad name among the streets and squares in which her carriage-wheels rolled. People called her a flirt, held up their hands in surprise at Sir Florian's foolish generosity — for the accounts of Lizzie's wealth were greatly exaggerated — and said that of course she would marry again.

The general belief which often seizes upon the world in regard to some special falsehood is very surprising. Everybody on a sudden adopts an idea that some particular man is over head and ears in debt, so that he can hardly leave his house for fear of the bailiffs; or that some ill-fated woman is cruelly ill-used by her husband; or that some eldest son has ruined his father; whereas the man does n't owe a shilling, the woman never hears a harsh word from her lord, and the eldest son in question has never succeeded in obtaining a shilling beyond his allowance. One of the lies about London this season was founded on the extent of Lady Eustace's jointure. Indeed the lie went to state that the jointure was more than a jointure. It was believed that the property in Ayrshire was her own, to do what she pleased with it. That the property in Ayrshire was taken at double its value was a matter of course. It had been declared, at the time of his marriage, that Sir Florian had been especially generous to his penniless wife, and the generosity was magnified in the ordinary way. No doubt Lizzie's own diligence had done much to propagate the story as to her positive ownership of Portray. Mr. Camperdown had been very busy denying this. John Eustace had denied it whenever occasion offered. The bishop in his quiet way had denied it. Lady Linlithgow had denied it. But the lie had been set on foot and had thriven, and there was hardly a man about town who did n't know that Lady Eustace had eight or nine thousand a year, altogether at her own disposal, down in Scotland. Of course a woman so endowed, so rich, so beautiful, so clever, so young, would marry again, and would marry well. No doubt, added to this there was a feeling that

"Lizzie," as she was not uncommonly called by people who had hardly ever seen her, had something amiss with it all. "I don't know where it is she 's lame," said that very clever man, Captain Boodle, who had lately reappeared among his military friends at his club, "but she don't go flat all round."

"She has the devil of a temper, no doubt," said Lieutenant Griggs.

"No mouth, I should say," said Boodle. It was thus that Lizzie was talked about at the clubs; but she was asked to dinners and balls, and gave little dinners herself, and to a certain extent was the fashion. Everybody had declared that of course she would marry again, and now it was known everywhere that she was engaged to Lord Fawn.

"Poor dear Lord Fawn!" said Lady Glencora Palliser to her dear friend Madame Max Goesler; "do you remember how violently he was in love with Violet Effingham two years ago?"

"Two years is a long time, Lady Glencora; and Violet Effingham has chosen another husband."

"But is n't this a fall for him? Violet was the sweetest girl out, and at one time I really thought she meant to take him."

"I thought she meant to take another man whom she did not take," said Mme. Goesler, who had her own recollections, who was a widow herself, and who, at the period to which Lady Glencora was referring, had thought that perhaps she might cease to be a widow. Not that she had ever suggested to herself that Lord Fawn might be her second husband.

"Poor Lord Fawn!" continued Lady Glencora. "I suppose he is terribly in want of money."

"But surely Lady Eustace is very pretty."

"Yes; she is very pretty; nay more, she is quite lovely to look at. And she is clever, very. And she is rich, very. But ——"

"Well, Lady Glencora. What does your 'but' mean?"

"Who ever explains a 'but'? You 're a great deal too clever, Mme. Goesler, to want any explanation. And I could n't explain it. I can only say I 'm sorry for poor Lord Fawn, who is a gentleman, but will never set the Thames on fire."

"No, indeed. All the same, I like Lord Fawn extremely," said Mme. Goesler, "and I think he 's just the man to marry Lady Eustace. He 's always at his office or at the House."

"A man may be a great deal at his office, and a great deal more at the House than Lord Fawn," said Lady Glencora laughing, "and yet think about his wife, my dear." For of all men known, no man spent more hours at the House or in his office than did Lady Glencora's husband, Mr. Palliser, who at this time, and had now for more than two years, filled the high place of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

This conversation took place in Mme. Goesler's little drawing-room in Park Lane; but, three days after this, the same two ladies met again at the house then occupied by Lady Chiltern in Portman Square — Lady Chiltern, with whom, as Violet Effingham, poor Lord Fawn had been much in love. "I think it the nicest match in the world for him," Lady Chiltern had said to Mme. Goesler.

"But have you heard of the diamonds?" asked Lady Glencora.

"What diamonds?" "Whose diamonds?" Neither

of the others had heard of the diamonds, and Lady Glencora was able to tell her story. Lady Eustace had found all the family jewels belonging to the Eustace family in the strong plate-room at Portray Castle, and had taken possession of them as property found in her own house. John Eustace and the bishop had combined in demanding them on behalf of the heir, and a lawsuit had been commenced! The diamonds were the most costly belonging to any Commoner in England, and had been valued at twenty-four thousand pounds! Lord Fawn had retreated from his engagement the moment he heard that any doubt was thrown on Lady Eustace's right to their possession! Lady Eustace had declared her intention of bringing an action against Lord Fawn, and had also secreted the diamonds! The reader will be aware that this statement was by no means an accurate history of the difficulty as far as it had as yet progressed. It was, indeed, absolutely false in every detail; but it sufficed to show that the matter was becoming public.

"You don't mean to say that Lord Fawn is off?" asked Mme. Goesler.

"I do," said Lady Glencora.

"Poor Lord Fawn!" exclaimed Lady Chiltern. "It really seems as though he never would be settled."

"I don't think he has courage enough for such conduct as that," said Mme. Goesler.

"And besides, Lady Eustace's income is quite certain," said Lady Chiltern, "and poor dear Lord Fawn does want money so badly."

"But it is very disagreeable," said Lady Glencora, "to believe that your wife has got the finest diamonds in England, and then to find that she has only — stolen

them. I think Lord Fawn is right. If a man does marry for money, he should have the money. I wonder she ever took him. There is no doubt about her beauty, and she might have done better."

"I won't hear Lord Fawn belittled," said Lady Chiltern.

"Done better!" said Mme. Goesler. "How could she have done better? He is a peer, and her son would be a peer. I don't think she could have done better." Lady Glencora in her time had wished to marry a man who had sought her for her money. Lady Chiltern in her time had refused to be Lady Fawn. Mme. Goesler in her time had declined to marry an English peer. There was, therefore, something more of interest in the conversation to each of them than was quite expressed in the words spoken. "Is she to be at your party on Friday, Lady Glencora?" asked Mme. Goesler.

"She has said she would come, and so has Lord Fawn; for that matter, Lord Fawn dines with us. She 'll find that out, and then she 'll stay away."

"Not she," said Lady Chiltern. "She 'll come for the sake of the bravado. She 's not the woman to show the white feather."

"If he 's ill-using her she 's quite right," said Mme. Goesler.

"And wear the very diamonds in dispute," said Lady Chiltern. It was thus that the matter was discussed among ladies in the town.

"Is Fawn's marriage going on?" This question was asked of Mr. Legge Wilson by Barrington Erle. Mr. Legge Wilson was the Secretary of State for India, and Barrington Erle was in the Government.

"Upon my word I don't know," said Mr. Wilson. "The work goes on at the office; that 's all I know about Fawn. He has n't told me of his marriage, and therefore I have n't spoken to him about it."

"He has n't made it official?"

"The papers have n't come before me yet," said Mr. Wilson.

"When they do they 'll be very awkward papers, as far as I hear," said Barrington Erle. "There is no doubt they were engaged, and I believe there is no doubt that he has declared off, and refused to give any reason."

"I suppose the money is not all there," suggested Mr. Wilson.

"There 's a queer story going about as to some diamonds. No one knows whom they belong to, and they say that Fawn has accused her of stealing them. He wants to get hold of them, and she won't give them up. I believe the lawyers are to have a shy at it. I 'm sorry for Fawn. It 'll do him a deal of mischief."

"You 'll find he won't come out much amiss," said Mr. Legge Wilson. "He 's as cautious a man as there is in London. If there is anything wrong——"

"There 's a great deal wrong," said Barrington Erle.

"You 'll find it will be on her side."

"And you 'll find also that she 'll contrive that all the blame shall lie upon him. She 's clever enough for anything! Who 's to be the new bishop?"

"I have not heard Gresham say as yet; Jones, I should think," said Mr. Wilson.

"And who is Jones?"

"A clergyman, I suppose, of the safe sort. I don't

know that anything else is necessary." From which it will be seen that Mr. Wilson had his own opinion about church matters, and also that people very high up in the world were concerning themselves about poor Lizzie's affairs.

Lady Eustace did go to Lady Glencora's evening party, in spite of Mr. Camperdown and all her difficulties. Lady Chiltern had been quite right in saying that Lizzie was not the woman to show the white feather. She went, knowing that she would meet Lord Fawn, and she did wear the diamonds. It was the first time that they had been round her neck since the occasion in respect to which Sir Florian had placed them in her hands, and it had not been without much screwing up of her courage that she had resolved to appear on this occasion with the much talked-of ornament upon her person. It was now something over a fortnight since she had parted with Lord Fawn at Fawn Court; and, although they were still presumed to be engaged to marry each other, and were both living in London, she had not seen him since. A sort of message had reached her, through Frank Greystock, to the effect that Lord Fawn thought it as well that they should not meet till the matter was settled. Stipulations had been made by Frank on her behalf, and this had been inserted among them. She had received the message with scorn — with a mixture of scorn and gratitude — of scorn in regard to the man who had promised to marry her, and of affectionate gratitude to the cousin who had made the arrangement. "Of course I shall not wish to see him while he chooses to entertain such an idea," she had said, "but I shall not keep out of his way. You would not wish me to keep

out of his way, Frank?" When she received a card for Lady Glencora's party, very soon after this, she was careful to answer it in such a manner as to impress Lady Glencora with a remembrance of her assent. Lord Fawn would probably be there, unless he remained away in order to avoid her. Then she had ten days in which to make up her mind as to wearing the diamonds. Her courage was good; but then her ignorance was so great! She did not know whether Mr. Camperdown might not contrive to have them taken by violence from her neck, even on Lady Glencora's stairs. Her best security, so she thought, would be in the fact that Mr. Camperdown would not know of her purpose. She told no one, not even Miss Macnulty, but she appeared before that lady, arrayed in all her beauty, just as she was about to descend to her carriage.

"You 've got the necklace on!" said Miss Macnulty.

"Why should I not wear my own necklace?" she asked, with assumed anger.

Lady Glencora's rooms were already very full when Lizzie entered them, but she was without a gentleman, and room was made for her to pass quickly up the stairs. The diamonds had been recognised by many before she had reached the drawing-room; not that these very diamonds were known, or that there was a special memory for that necklace; but the subject had been so generally discussed, that the blaze of the stones immediately brought it to the minds of men and women. "There she is, with poor Eustace's twenty thousand pounds round her neck," said Laurence Fitzgibbon to his friend Barrington Erle. "And there is Lord Fawn going to look after them," replied the other.

Lord Fawn thought it right, at any rate, to look after his bride. Lady Glencora had whispered into his ear before they went down to dinner that Lady Eustace would be there in the evening, so that he might have the option of escaping or remaining. Could he have escaped without any one knowing that he had escaped, he would not have gone up-stairs after dinner; but he knew that he was observed; he knew that people were talking about him; and he did not like it to be said that he had run away. He went up, thinking much of it all, and as soon as he saw Lady Eustace he made his way to her and accosted her. Many eyes were upon them, but no ear probably heard how infinitely unimportant were the words which they spoke to each other. Her manner was excellent. She smiled and gave him her hand — just her hand without the slightest pressure — and spoke a half-whispered word, looking into his face, but betraying nothing by her look. Then he asked her whether she would dance. Yes; she would stand up for a quadrille; and they did stand up for a quadrille. As she danced with no one else, it was clear that she treated Lord Fawn as her lover. As soon as the dance was done she took his arm and moved for a few minutes about the room with him. She was very conscious of the diamonds, but she did not show the feeling in her face. He also was conscious of them, and he did show it. He did not recognise the necklace, but he knew well that this was the very bone of contention. They were very beautiful, and seemed to him to outshine all other jewelry in the room. And Lady Eustace was a woman of whom it might almost be said that she ought to wear diamonds. She was made to sparkle, to be bright with outside

garniture — to shine and glitter, and be rich in apparel. The only doubt might be whether paste diamonds might not better suit her character. But these were not paste, and she did shine and glitter and was very rich. It must not be brought as an accusation against Lady Glencora's guests that they pressed round to look at the necklace. Lady Glencora's guests knew better than to do that. But there was some slight ferment — slight, but still felt both by Lord Fawn and by Lady Eustace. Eyes were turned upon the diamonds, and there were whispers here and there. Lizzie bore it very well; but Lord Fawn was uncomfortable.

"I like her for wearing them," said Lady Glencora to Lady Chiltern.

"Yes — if she means to keep them. I don't pretend, however, to know anything about it. You see the match is n't off."

"I suppose not. What do you think I did? He dined here, you know, and, before going down-stairs, I told him that she was coming. I thought it only fair."

"And what did he say?"

"I took care that he should n't have to say anything; but, to tell the truth, I did n't expect him to come up."

"There can't be any quarrel at all," said Lady Chiltern.

"I 'm not sure of that," said Lady Glencora. "They are not so very loving."

Lady Eustace made the most of her opportunity. Soon after the quadrille was over she asked Lord Fawn to get her carriage for her. Of course he got it, and of course he put her into it, passing up and down stairs

twice in his efforts on her behalf. And of course all the world saw what he was doing. Up to the last moment not a word had been spoken between them that might not have passed between the most ordinary acquaintance; but, as she took her seat, she put her face forward and did say a word. "You had better come to me soon," she said.

"I will," said Lord Fawn.

"Yes; you had better come soon. All this is wearing me — perhaps more than you think."

"I will come soon," said Lord Fawn, and then he returned among Lady Glencora's guests, very uncomfortable. Lizzie got home in safety and locked up her diamonds in the iron box.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AND I HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE.

It was now the end of June, and Frank Greystock had been as yet but once at Fawn Court since he had written to Lucy Morris asking her to be his wife. That was three weeks since, and as the barrier against him at Fawn Court had been removed by Lady Fawn herself, the Fawn girls thought that as a lover he was very slack; but Lucy was not in the least annoyed. Lucy knew that it was all right; for Frank, as he took his last walk round the shrubbery with her during that visit, had given her to understand that there was a little difference between him and Lady Fawn in regard to Lizzie Eustace. "I am her only relative in London," Frank had said.

"Lady Linlithgow," suggested Lucy.

"They have quarrelled, and the old woman is as bitter as gall. There is no one else to stand up for her, and I must see that she is n't ill-used. Women do hate each other so virulently, and Lady Fawn hates her future daughter-in-law." Lucy did not in the least grudge her lover's assistance to his cousin. There was nothing of jealousy in her feeling. She thought that Lizzie was unworthy of Frank's goodness, but on such an occasion as this she would not say so. She told him nothing of the bribe that had been offered her, nor on that subject had she said a word to any of the Fawns.

She understood, too, that as Frank had declared his purpose of supporting Lizzie, it might be as well that he should see just at present as little of Lady Fawn as possible. Not a word, however, had Lady Fawn said to Lucy disparaging her lover for his conduct. It was quite understood now at Fawn Court, by all the girls, and no doubt by the whole establishment, that Lizzie Eustace was to be regarded as an enemy. It was believed by them all that Lord Fawn had broken off the match — or, at least, that he was resolved to break it; but various stratagems were to be used, and terrible engines of war were to be brought up if necessary, to prevent an alliance which was now thought to be disreputable. Mrs. Hittaway had been hard at work, and had found out something very like truth in regard to the whole transaction with Mr. Benjamin. Perhaps Mrs. Hittaway had found out more than was quite true as to poor Lizzie's former sins; but what she did find out she used with all her skill, communicating her facts to her mother, to Mr. Camperdown, and to her brother. Her brother had almost quarrelled with her, but still she continued to communicate her facts.

At this period Frank Greystock was certainly somewhat unreasonable in reference to his cousin. At one time, as the reader will remember, he had thought of asking her to be his wife — because she was rich; but even then he had not thought well of her, had hardly believed her to be honest, and had rejoiced when he found that circumstances rather than his own judgment had rescued him from that evil. He had professed to be delighted when Lord Fawn was accepted — as being happy to think that his somewhat dangerous cousin was provided with so safe a husband; and, when he had

first heard of the necklace, he had expressed an opinion that of course it would be given up. In all this then he had shown no strong loyalty to his cousin, no very dear friendship, nothing to make those who knew him feel that he would buckle on armour in her cause. But of late — and that, too, since his engagement with Lucy — he had stood up very stoutly as her friend, and the armour was being buckled on. He had not scrupled to say that he meant to see her through this business with Lord Fawn, and had somewhat astonished Mr. Camperdown by raising a doubt on the question of the necklace.

"He can't but know that she has no more right to it than I have," Mr. Camperdown had said to his son with indignation. Mr. Camperdown was becoming unhappy about the necklace, not quite knowing how to proceed in the matter.

In the mean time Frank had obeyed his better instincts, and had asked Lucy Morris to be his wife. He had gone to Fawn Court in compliance with a promise to Lizzie Eustace that he would call upon her there. He had walked with Lucy because he was at Fawn Court. And he had written to Lucy because of the words he had spoken during the walk. In all this the matter had arranged itself as such matters do, and there was nothing, in truth, to be regretted. He really did love the girl with all his heart. It may, perhaps, be said that he had never in truth loved any other woman. In the best humours of his mind he would tell himself — had from old times told himself often — that unless he married Lucy Morris he could never marry at all. When his mother, knowing that poor Lucy was penniless, had, as mothers will do, begged him to

beware, he had spoken up for his love honestly, declaring to her that in his eyes there was no woman living equal to Lucy Morris. The reader has seen him with the words almost on his tongue with which to offer his hand to his cousin, Lizzie Eustace, knowing as he did so that his heart had been given to Lucy — knowing also that Lucy's heart had been given to him! But he had not done it, and the better humour had prevailed.

Within the figure and frame and clothes and cuticle, within the bones and flesh of many of us, there is but one person, a man or woman, with a preponderance either of good or evil, whose conduct in any emergency may be predicted with some assurance of accuracy by by any one knowing the man or woman. Such persons are simple, single, and perhaps generally safe. They walk along lines in accordance with certain fixed instincts or principles, and are to-day as they were yesterday, and will be to-morrow as they are to-day. Lady Eustace was such a person, and so was Lucy Morris. Opposite in their characters as the two poles, they were each of them a simple entity; and any doubt or error in judging of the future conduct of either of them would come from insufficient knowledge of the woman. But there are human beings who, though of necessity single in body, are dual in character; in whose breasts not only is evil always fighting against good, but to whom evil is sometimes horribly, hideously evil, but is sometimes also not hideous at all. Of such men it may be said that Satan obtains an intermittent grasp, from which, when it is released, the rebound carries them high amid virtuous resolutions and a thorough love of things good and noble. Such men or women may hardly perhaps debase themselves with the more

vulgar vices. They will not be rogues, or thieves, or drunkards, or perhaps liars; but ambition, luxury, self-indulgence, pride, and covetousness will get a hold of them, and in various moods will be to them virtues in lieu of vices. Such a man was Frank Greystock, who could walk along the banks of the quiet, trout-giving Bob, at Bobsborough, whipping the river with his rod, telling himself that the world lost for love would be a bad thing well lost for a fine purpose; and who could also stand, with his hands in his trousers pockets, looking down upon the pavement, in the purlieus of the courts at Westminster, and swear to himself that he would win the game, let the cost to his heart be what it might. What must a man be who would allow some undefined feeling, some inward ache which he calls a passion and cannot analyse, some desire which has come of instinct and not of judgment, to interfere with all the projects of his intellect, with all the work which he has laid out for his accomplishment? Circumstances had thrown him into a path of life for which, indeed, his means were insufficient, but which he regarded as of all paths the noblest and the manliest. If he could be true to himself — with such truth as at these moments would seem to him to be the truest truth — there was nothing in rank, nothing in ambition, which might not be within his reach. He might live with the highest, the best-educated, and the most beautiful; he might assist in directing national councils by his intelligence; and might make a name for himself which should be remembered in his country, and of which men would read the records in the histories written in after ages. But to do this he must walk warily. He, an embarrassed man, a man already in debt, a man with no realised

property coming to him in reversion, was called upon to live, and to live as though at his ease, among those who had been born to wealth. And, indeed, he had so cleverly learned the ways of the wealthy that he hardly knew any longer how to live at his ease among the poor.

But had he walked warily when he went down to Richmond, and afterward, sitting alone in the obscurity of his chamber, wrote the letter which had made Lucy Morris so happy? It must be acknowledged that he did in truth love the girl — that he was capable of a strong feeling. She was not beautiful, hardly even pretty, small, in appearance almost insignificant, quite penniless, a governess! He had often asked himself what it was that had so vanquished him. She always wore a pale gray frock, with perhaps a gray ribbon, never running into any bright form of clothing. She was educated, very well educated; but she owned no great accomplishment. She had not sung his heart away or ravished him with the harp. Even of her words she was sparing, seeming to care more to listen than to speak; a humble little thing to look at — one of whom you might say that she regarded herself as well-placed if left in the background. Yet he had found her out and knew her. He had recognised the treasure, and had greatly desired to possess it. He had confessed to himself that, could splendour and ambition be laid aside, that little thing would be all the world to him. As he sat in court or in the House, patient from practice as he half-listened to the ponderous speeches of advocates or politicians, he would think of the sparkle in her eye, of the dimple in her chin, of the lines of the mouth which could plead so eloquently,

though with few words. To sit on some high seat among his countrymen and also to marry Lucy Morris, that would be a high ambition. He had chosen his way now, and she was engaged to be his wife.

As he thought of it after he had done it, it was not all happiness, all contentment with him. He did feel that he had crippled himself — impeded himself in running the race, as it were with a log round his leg. He had offered to marry her, and he must do so at once, or almost at once, because she could now find no other home but his. He knew, as well as did Lady Fawn, that she could not go into another family as governess; and he knew also that she ought not to remain in Lady Fawn's house an hour longer than she should be wanted there. He must alter his plan of living at once, give up the luxury of his rooms at the Grosvenor, take a small house somewhere, probably near the Swiss Cottage, come up and down to his chambers by the underground railway, and in all probability abandon Parliament altogether. He was not sure whether in good faith he should not at once give notice of his intended acceptance of the Chiltern Hundreds to the electors of Bobsborough. Thus meditating, under the influence of that intermittent evil grasp, almost angry with himself for the open truth which he had spoken, or rather written, and perhaps thinking more of Lizzie and her beauty than he should have done, in the course of three weeks he had paid but one visit to Fawn Court. Then, of a sudden, finding himself one afternoon relieved from work, he resolved to go there. The days were still almost at their longest, and he did not scruple to present himself before Lady Fawn between eight and nine in the evening. They were all at tea, and he was welcomed

kindly. Lucy, when he was announced, at once got up and met him almost at the doorway, sparkling with just a tear of joy in her eye, with a look in her face and a loving manner, which for the moment made him sure that the little house near the Swiss Cottage would, after all, be the only Elysium upon earth. If she spoke a word he hardly heard it, but her hand was in his, so cool and soft, almost trembling in its grasp, with no attempt to withdraw itself, frank, loving, and honest. There was a perfect satisfaction in her greeting which at once told him that she had no discontented thoughts — had had no such thoughts — because he had been so long without coming. To see him was a great joy. But every hour of her life was a joy to her, knowing, as she did know, that he loved her.

Lady Fawn was gracious, the girls were hospitable, and he found himself made very welcome amidst all the women at the tea-table. Not a word was said about Lizzie Eustace. Lady Fawn talked about Parliament, and professed to pity a poor lover who was so bound to his country that he could not see his mistress above once a fortnight. "But there 'll be a good time coming next month," she said; for it was now July. "Though the girls can't make their claims felt, the grouse can."

"It is n't the House altogether that rules me with a rod of iron, Lady Fawn," said Frank, "but the necessity of earning daily bread by the sweat of my brow. A man who has to sit in court all day must take the night — or, indeed, any time that he can get — to read up his cases."

"But the grouse put a stop to all work," said Lady Fawn. "My gardener told me just now that he wanted

a day or two in August. I don't doubt but that he is going to the moors. Are you going to the moors, Mr. Greystock?"

As it happened, Frank Greystock did not quite know whether he was going to the moors or not. The Ayrshire grouse-shooting is not the best in Scotland; but there is grouse-shooting in Ayrshire; and the shooting on the Portray mountains is not the worst shooting in the county. The castle at Portray overhangs the sea, but there is a wild district attached to it stretching far back inland, in regard to which Lizzie Eustace was very proud of talking of "her shooting." Early in the spring of the present year she had asked her cousin Frank to accept the shooting for the coming season, and he had accepted it. "I shall probably be abroad," she said, "but there is the old castle." She had offered it as though he had been her brother, and he had said that he would go down for a couple of weeks — not to the castle, but to a little lodge some miles up from the sea, of which she told him when he declined the castle. When this invitation was given there was no engagement between her and Lord Fawn. Since that date, within the last day or two, she had reminded him of it.

"Won't his lordship be there?" he had said laughingly.

"Certainly not," she had answered with serious earnestness. Then she had explained that her plan of going abroad had been set aside by circumstances. She did mean to go down to Portray. "I could n't have you at the castle," she said smiling; "but even an Othello could n't object to a first cousin at a little cottage ever so many miles off." It was n't for him to suggest what objections might rise to the brain of a

modern Othello; but after some hesitation he said that he would be there. He had promised the trip to a friend, and would like to keep his promise. But, nevertheless, he almost thought that he ought to avoid Portray. He intended to support his cousin as far as he might do so honestly; but he was not quite minded to stand by her through good report and evil report. He did not desire to be specially known as her champion, and yet he felt that that position would be almost forced upon him. He foresaw danger, and consequently he was doubting about his journey to Scotland.

"I hardly know whether I am or not," said Frank, and he almost felt that he was blushing.

"I hope you are," said Lucy. "When a man has to work all day and nearly all night, he should go where he may get fresh air."

"There 's very good air without going to Scotland for it," said Lady Fawn, who kept up an excellent house at Richmond, but who, with all her daughters, could not afford autumn trips. The Fawns lived at Fawn Court all the year round, and consequently Lady Fawn thought that air was to be found in England sufficiently good for all purposes of vitality and recreation.

"It 's not quite the same thing," said Lucy; "at least, not for a man."

After that she was allowed to escape into the grounds with her lover, and was made happy with half an hour of unalloyed bliss. To be alone with the girl to whom he is not engaged is a man's delight; to be alone with the man to whom she engaged is the woman's. When the thing is settled there is always present to the man something of a feeling of clipped wings; whereas the

woman is conscious of a new power of expanding her pinions. The certainty of the thing is to him repressive. He has done his work, and gained his victory, and by conquering has become a slave. To her the certainty of the thing is the removal of a restraint which has hitherto always been on her. She can tell him everything, and be told everything, whereas her previous confidences, made with those of her own sex, have been tame, and by comparison valueless. He has no new confidence to make, unless when he comes to tell her he likes his meat well done, and wants his breakfast to be punctual. Lucy now not only promised herself, but did actually realise a great joy. He seemed to be to her all that her heart desired. He was a man whose manner was naturally caressing and demonstrative, and she was to him, of all women, the sweetest, the dearest, the most perfect, and all his own. "But, Frank" — she had already been taught to call him Frank when they were alone together — "what will come of all this about Lizzie Eustace?"

"They will be married, of course."

"Do you think so? I am sure Lady Fawn does n't think so."

"What Lady Fawn thinks on such a matter cannot be helped. When a man asks a woman to marry him, and she accepts, the natural consequence is that they will be married. Don't you think so?"

"I hope so, sometimes," said Lucy, with her two hands joined upon his arm, and hanging to it with all her little weight.

"You really do hope it?" he said.

"Oh, I do; you know I do. Hope it! I should die if I did n't hope it."

"Then why should n't she?" He asked his question with a quick, sharp voice, and then turned upon her for an answer.

"I don't know," she said, very softly, and still clinging to him. "I sometimes think there is a difference in people."

"There is a difference; but, still, we hardly judge of people sufficiently by our own feelings. As she accepted him, you may be sure that she wishes to marry him. She has more to give than he has."

"And I have nothing to give," she said.

"If I thought so, I 'd go back even now," he answered. "It is because you have so much to give — so much more than most others — that I have thought of you, dreamed of you as my wife, almost ever since I first knew you."

"I have nothing left to give," she said. "What I ever had is all given. People call it the heart. I think it is heart, and brain, and mind, and body, and almost soul. But, Frank, though Lizzie Eustace is your cousin, I don't want to be likened to her. She is very clever, and beautiful, and has a way with her that I know is charming. But ——"

"But what, Lucy?"

"I don't think she cares so much as some people. I dare say she likes Lord Fawn very well, but I do not believe she loves him as I love you."

"They 're engaged," said Frank, "and the best thing they can do is to marry each other. I can tell you this at any rate," — and his manner again became serious M "if Lord Fawn behaves ill to her, I, as her cousin, shall take her part."

"You don't mean that you 'll — fight him!"

"No, my darling. Men don't fight each other nowadays — not often, at least — and Fawn and I are not of the fighting sort. I can make him understand what I mean and what others will mean without fighting him. He is making a paltry excuse."

"But why should he want to excuse himself — without reason?"

"Because he is afraid. People have got hold of him and told him lies, and he thinks there will be a scrape about this necklace, and he hates a scrape. He 'll marry her at last, without a doubt, and Lady Fawn is only making trouble for herself by trying to prevent it. You can't do anything."

"Oh no — I can't do anything. When she was here it became at last quite disagreeable. She hardly spoke to them, and I 'm sure that even the servants understood that there was a quarrel." She did not say a word of Lizzie's offer of the brooch to herself, nor of the stories which by degrees were reaching her ears as to the old debts, and the diamonds, and the young bride's conduct to Lady Linlithgow as soon as she married her grand husband, Sir Florian. She did think badly of Lizzie, and could not but regret that her own noble, generous Frank should have to expend his time and labour on a friend unworthy of his friendship; but there was no shade of jealousy in her feeling, and she uttered no word against Lizzie more bitter than that in which she declared that there was a difference between people.

And then there was something said as to their own prospects in life. Lucy at once and with vehemence declared that she did not look for or expect an immediate marriage. She did not scruple to tell him that she knew well how difficult was the task before him, and

that it might be essential for his interest that he should remain as he was for a year or two. He was astonished to find how completely she understood his position, and how thoroughly she sympathised with his interests. "There is only one thing I could n't do for you," she said.

"And what is the one thing?"

"I could n't give you up. I almost thought that I ought to refuse you because I can do nothing — nothing to help you. But there will always come a limit to self-denial. I could n't do that! Could I?"

The reader will know how this question was answered, and will not want to be told of the long, close, clinging, praiseworthy kiss with which the young barrister assured her that would have been on her part an act of self-denial which would to him have been absolutely ruinous. It was agreed, however, between them, that Lady Fawn should be told that they did not propose to marry till some time in the following year, and that she should be formally asked to allow Lucy to have a home at Fawn Court in the interval.

CHAPTER XIX.

AS MY BROTHER.

Lord Fawn had promised, as he put Lizzie into her carriage, that he would come to her soon — but he did not come soon. A fortnight passed and he did not show himself. Nothing further had been done in the matter of the diamonds, except that Mr. Camperdown had written to Frank Greystock, explaining how impossible it was that the question of their possession should be referred to arbitration. According to him they belonged to the heir, as did the estate; and no one would have the power of accepting an arbitration respecting them — an arbitration which might separate them from the estate of which an infant was the owner for his life — any more than such arbitration could be accepted as to the property of the estate itself. "Possession is nine points of the law," said Frank to himself, as he put the letter aside — thinking at the same time that possession in the hands of Lizzie Eustace included certainly every one of those nine points. Lizzie wore her diamonds again and then again. There may be a question whether the possession of the necklace and the publicity of its history — which, however, like many other histories, was most inaccurately told — did not add something to her reputation as a lady of fashion. In the mean time Lord Fawn did

not come to see her. So she wrote to him. "My dear Frederic: Had you not better come to me? Yours affectionately, L. I go to the North at the end of this month."

But Frank Greystock did visit her, more than once. On the day after the above letter was written he came to her. It was on Sunday afternoon, when July was more than half over, and he found her alone. Miss Macnulty had gone to church, and Lizzie was lying listlessly on a sofa with a volume of poetry in her hand. She had, in truth, been reading the book, and in her way enjoying it. It told her the story of certain knights of old, who had gone forth in quest of a sign from heaven, which sign, if verily seen by them, might be taken to signify that they themselves were esteemed holy, and fit for heavenly joy. One would have thought that no theme could have been less palatable to such a one as Lizzie Eustace; but the melody of the lines had pleased her ear, and she was always able to arouse for herself a false enthusiasm on things which were utterly outside herself in life. She thought she too could have travelled in search of that holy sign, and have borne all things, and abandoned all things, and have persevered, and of a certainty have been rewarded. But as for giving up a string of diamonds, in common honesty, that was beyond her.

"I wonder whether men ever were like that?" she said, as she allowed her cousin to take the book from her hands.

"Let us hope not."

"Oh, Frank!"

"They were, no doubt, as fanatic and foolish as you please. If you will read to the end ——"

"I have read it all, every word of it," said Lizzie, enthusiastically.

"Then you know that Arthur did not go on the search, because he had a job of work to do, by the doing of which the people around him might perhaps be somewhat benefited."

"I like Launcelot better than Arthur," said Lizzie.

"So did the Queen," replied Frank.

"Your useful, practical man, who attends vestries and sits at boards, and measures out his gifts to others by the ounce, never has any heart. Has he, Frank?"

"I don't know what heart means. I sometimes fancy that it is a talent for getting into debt, and running away with other men's wives."

"You say that on purpose to make me quarrel with you. You don't run away with other men's wives, and you have heart."

"But I get into debt, unfortunately; and as for other men's wives, I am not sure that I may not do even that some day. Has Lord Fawn been here?" She shook her head. "Or written?" Again she shook her head. As she did so the long curl waved and was very near to him, for he was sitting close to the sofa, and she had raised herself so that she might look into his face and speak to him almost in a whisper. "Something should be settled, Lizzie, before you leave town."

"I wrote to him yesterday, one line, and desired him to come. . I expected him here to-day, but you have come instead. Shall I say that I am disappointed?"

"No doubt you are so."

"Oh, Frank, how vain you men are! You want

me to swear to you that I would sooner have you with me than him. You are not content with — thinking it, unless I tell you that it is so. You know that it is so. Though he is to be my husband — I suppose he will be my husband — his spirit is not congenial to mine, as is yours."

"Had you not loved him you would not have accepted him."

"What was I to do, Frank? What am I to do? Think how desolate I am, how unfriended, how much in want of some one whom I can call a protector! I cannot have you always with me. You care more for the little finger of that prim piece of propriety down at the old dowager's than you do for me and all my sorrows." This was true, but Frank did not say that it was true. "Lord Fawn is at any rate respectable. At least I thought he was so when I accepted his offer."

"He is respectable enough."

"Just that — is n't it? — and nothing more. You do not blame me for saying that I would be his wife? If you do, I will unsay it, let it cost me what it may. He is treating me so badly that I need not go far for an excuse." Then she looked into his face with all the eagerness of her gaze, clearly implying that she expected a serious answer. "Why do you not answer me, Frank?"

"What am I to say? He is a timid, cautious man. They have frightened him about this trumpery necklace, and he is behaving badly. But he will make a good husband. He is not a spendthrift. He has rank. All his people are respectable. As Lady Fawn any house in England will be open to you. He is not rich, but together you will be rich."

"What is all that without love?"

"I do not doubt his love. And when you are his own he will love you dearly."

"Ah, yes; as he would a horse or a picture. Is there anything of the rapture of love in that? Is that your idea of love? Is it so you love your Miss Demure?"

"Don't call names, Lizzie."

"I shall say what I please of her. You and I are to be friends, and I may not speak? No; I will have no such friendship! She is demure. If you like it, what harm is there in my saying it? I am not demure. I know that. I do not, at least, pretend to be other than I am. When she becomes your wife, I wonder whether you will like her ways?" He had not yet told her that she was to be his wife, nor did he so tell her now. He thought for a moment that he had better tell her, but he did not do so. It would, he said to himself, add an embarrassment to his present position. And as the marriage was to be postponed for a year, it might be better, perhaps, for Lucy that it should not be declared openly. It was thus he argued with himself, but yet, no doubt, he knew well that he did not declare the truth because it would take away something of its sweetness from this friendship with his cousin Lizzie.

"If I ever do marry," he said, "I hope I shall like my wife's ways."

"Of course you will not tell me anything. I do not expect confidence from you. I do not think a man is ever able to work himself up to the mark of true confidence with his friend. Men together, when they like each other, talk of politics, or perhaps of money; but

I doubt whether they ever really tell their thoughts and longings to each other."

"Are women more communicative?"

"Yes; certainly. What is there I would not tell you if you cared to hear it? Every thought I have is open to you if you choose to read it. I have that feeling regarding you that I would keep nothing back from you. Oh, Frank, if you understood me, you could save me — I was going to say — from all unhappiness."

She did it so well that he would have been more than man had he not believed some of it. She was sitting almost upright now, though her feet were still on the sofa, and was leaning over towards him, as though imploring him for his aid, and her eyes were full of tears, and her lips were apart as though still eager with the energy of expression, and her hands were clasped together. She was very lovely, very attractive, almost invincible. For such a one as Frank Greystock opposition to her in her present mood was impossible. There are men by whom a woman, if she have wit, beauty, and no conscience, cannot be withstood. Arms may be used against them, and a sort of battle waged, against which they can raise no shield — from which they can retire into no fortress — in which they can parry no blow. A man so weak and so attacked may sometimes run; but even the poor chance of running is often cut off from him. How unlike she was to Lucy! He believed her — in part; and yet that was the idea that occurred to him. When Lucy was much in earnest, in her eye, too, a tear would sparkle, the smallest drop, a bright liquid diamond that never fell; and all her face would be bright and eloquent with feeling; but how unlike were the two!

He knew that the difference was that between truth and falsehood; and yet he partly believed the falsehood. "If I knew how to save you from an hour's uneasiness, I would do it," he said.

"No — no — no!" she murmured.

"Would I not? You do not know me then." He had nothing further to say, and it suited her to remain silent for the moment, while she dried her eyes and recovered her composure, and prepared herself to carry on the battle with a smile. She would carry on the battle, using every wile she knew, straining every nerve to be victorious, encountering any and all dangers, and yet she had no definite aim before her. She herself did not know what she would be at. At this period of her career she did not want to marry her cousin — having resolved that she would be Lady Fawn. Nor did she intend that her cousin should be her lover — in the ordinary sense of love. She was far too wary in the pursuit of the world's goods to sacrifice herself to any such wish as that. She did want him to help her about the diamonds; but such help as that she might have, as she knew well, on much easier terms. There was probably an anxiety in her bosom to cause him to be untrue to Lucy Morris; but the guiding motive of her conduct was the desire to make things seem to be other than they were. To be always acting a part rather than living her own life was to her everything. "After all we must come to facts," he said, after a while. "I suppose it will be better that you should marry Lord Fawn."

"If you wish it."

"Nay; I cannot have that said. In this matter you must rule yourself by your own judgment. If you are

averse to it ——" She shook her head. "Then you will own that it had better be so." Again she shook her head. "Lizzie, for your sake and my own, I must declare that if you have no opinion in this matter, neither will I have any. You shall never have to say that I pressed you into this marriage or debarred you from marrying. I could not bear such an accusation."

"But you might tell me what I ought to do."

"No; certainly not."

"Think how young I am, and — by comparison — how old you are. You are eight years older than I am. Remember, after all that I have gone through, I am but twenty-two. At my age other girls have their friends to tell them. I have no one, unless you will tell me."

"You have accepted him?"

"Yes."

"I suppose he is not altogether indifferent to you?"

She paused, and again shook her head. "Indeed I do not know. If you mean, do I love him, as I could love some man whose heart was quite congenial to my own, certainly I do not." She continued to shake her head very sadly. "I esteemed him — when he asked me."

"Say at once that, having made up your mind, you will go through with it."

"You think that I ought?"

"You think so — yourself."

"So be it, Frank. I will. But, Frank, I will not give up my property. You do not wish me to do that. It would be weak now — would it not? I am sure that it is my own."

"His faith to you should not depend on that."

"No, of course not; that is just what I mean. He can have no right to interfere. When he asked me to be his wife, he said nothing about that. But if he does not come to me, what shall I do?"

"I suppose I had better see him," said Frank slowly.

"Will you? That will be so good of you. I feel that I can leave it all safely in your hands. I shall go out of town, you know, on the 30th. I feel that I shal be better away, and I am sick of all the noise, and glitter, and worldliness of London. You will come on the 12th?"

"Not quite so soon as that," he said, after a pause.

"But you will come?"

"Yes; about the 20th."

"And of course, I shall see you?"

"Oh, yes."

"So that I may have some one to guide me that I can trust. I have no brother, Frank; do you ever think of that?" She put out her hand to him, and he clasped it, and held it tight in his own; and then, after a while, he pulled her towards him. In a moment she was on the ground, kneeling at his feet, and his arm was round her shoulder, and his hand was on her back, and he was embracing her. Her face was turned up to him, and he pressed his lips upon her forehead. "As my brother," she said, stretching back her head and looking up into his face.

"Yes; as your brother."

They were sitting, or rather acting their little play together, in the back drawing-room, and the ordinary entrance to the two rooms was from the landing-place into the larger apartment; of which fact Lizzie was

probably aware, when she permitted herself to fall into a position as to which a moment or two might be wanted for recovery. When, therefore, the servant in livery opened the door, which he did as Frank thought somewhat suddenly, she was able to be standing on her legs before she was caught. The quickness with which she sprung from her position, and the facility with which she composed not her face only, but the loose lock of her hair and all her person, for the reception of the coming visitor, was quite marvellous. About her there was none of the look of having been found out, which is so very disagreeable to the wearer of it; whereas Frank, when Lord Fawn was announced, was aware that his manner was awkward, and his general appearance flurried. Lizzie was no more flurried than if she had stepped that moment from out of the hands of her tirewoman. She greeted Lord Fawn very prettily, holding him by the hand long enough to show that she had more claim to do so than could any other woman, and then she just murmured her cousin's name. The two men shook hands, and looked at each other as men who know they are not friends, and think that they may live to be enemies. Lord Fawn, who rarely forgot anything, had certainly not forgotten the Sawab; and Frank was aware that he might soon be called on to address his lordship in anything but friendly terms. They said, however, a few words about Parliament and the weather, and the desirability of escaping from London.

"Frank," said Lady Eustace, "is coming down in August to shoot my three annual grouse at Portray. He would keep one for you, my lord, if he thought you would come for it."

"I 'll promise Lord Fawn a fair third at any rate," said Frank.

"I cannot visit Portray this August, I 'm afraid," said his lordship, "much as I might wish to do so. One of us must remain at the India Office ——"

"Oh, that weary India Office!" exclaimed Lizzie.

"I almost think that you official men are worse off than we barristers," said Frank. "Well, Lizzie, good-by. I dare say I shall see you again before you start."

"Of course you will," said Lizzie. And then the two lovers were left together. They had met once, at Lady Glencora's ball, since the quarrel at Fawn Court, and there, as though by mutual forbearance, had not alluded to their troubles. Now he had come especially to speak of the matter that concerned them both so deeply. As long as Frank Greystock was in the room his work was comparatively easy, but he had known beforehand that he would not find it all easy should he be left alone with her. Lizzie began. "My lord," she said, "considering all that has passed between us you have been a truant."

"Yes; I admit it — but ——"

"With me, my lord, a fault admitted is a fault forgiven." Then she took her old seat on the sofa, and he placed himself on the chair which Frank Greystock had occupied. He had not intended to own a fault, and certainly not to accept forgiveness; but she had been too quick for him; and now he could not find words by which to express himself. "In truth," she continued, "I would always rather remember one kindness than a dozen omissions on the part of a friend."

"Lady Eustace, I have not willingly omitted anything."

"So be it. I will not give you the slightest excuse for saying that you have heard a reproach from me. You have come at last, and you are welcome. Is that enough for you?"

He had much to say to her about the diamonds, and when he was entering the room he had not a word to say to her about anything else. Since that another subject had sprung up before him. Whether he was or was not to regard himself as being at this moment engaged to marry Lady Eustace, was a matter to him of much doubt; but of this he was sure, that if she were engaged to him as his wife, she ought not to be entertaining her cousin Frank Greystock down at Portray Castle unless she had some old lady, not only respectable in life but high in rank also, to see that everything was right. It was almost an insult to him that such a visit should have been arranged without his sanction or cognisance. Of course, if he were bound by no engagement — and he had been persuaded by his mother and sister to wish that he were not bound — then the matter would be no affair of his. If, however, the diamonds were abandoned, then the engagement was to be continued: and in that case it was out of the question that his elected bride should entertain another young man, even though she was a widow and the young man was her cousin. Of course he should have spoken of the diamonds first; but the other matter had obtruded itself upon him, and he was puzzled. "Is Mr. Greystock to accompany you into Scotland?" he asked.

"Oh dear, no. I go on the 30th of this month. I hardly know when he means to be there."

"He follows you to Portray?"

"Yes; he follows me of course. 'The king himself has followed her, when she has gone before.'" Lord Fawn did not remember the quotation, and was more puzzled than ever. "Frank will follow me, just as the other shooting men will follow me."

"He goes direct to Portray Castle?"

"Neither directly nor indirectly. Just at present, Lord Fawn, I am in no mood to entertain guests — not even one that I love so well as my cousin Frank. The Portray mountains are somewhat extensive, and at the back of them there is a little shooting-lodge."

"Oh, indeed," said Lord Fawn, feeling that he had better dash at once at the diamonds.

"If you, my lord, could manage to join us for a day, my cousin and his friend would, I am sure, come over to the castle, so that you should not suffer from being left alone with me and Miss Macnulty."

"At present it is impossible," said Lord Fawn; and then he paused. "Lady Eustace, the position in which you and I stand to each other is one not altogether free from trouble."

"You cannot say that it is of my making," she said with a smile. "You once asked — what men think a favour from me — and I granted it, perhaps too easily."

"I know how greatly I am indebted to your goodness, Lady Eustace ——" And then again he paused.

"Lord Fawn!"

"I trust you will believe that nothing can be further from me than that you should be harassed by any conduct of mine."

"I am harassed, my lord."

"And so am I. I have learned that you are in pos-

session of certain jewels which I cannot allow to be held by my wife."

"I am not your wife, Lord Fawn." As she said this she rose from her reclining posture and sat erect.

"That is true. You are not. But you said you would be."

"Go on, sir."

"It was the pride of my life to think that I had attained to so much happiness. Then came this matter of the diamonds."

"What business have you with my diamonds more than any other man?"

"Simply that I am told that they are not yours."

"Who tells you so?"

"Various people. Mr. Camperdown."

"If you, my lord, intend to take an attorney's word against mine, and that on a matter as to which no one but myself can know the truth, then you are not fit to be my husband. The diamonds are my own, and should you and I become man and wife, they must remain so by special settlement. While I choose to keep them they will be mine, to do with them as I please. It will be my pleasure, when my boy marries, to hang them round his bride's neck." She carried herself well, and spoke her words with dignity.

"What I have got to say is this," began Lord Fawn. "I must consider our engagement as at an end unless you will give them up to Mr. Camperdown."

"I will not give them up to Mr. Camperdown."

"Then — then — then ——"

"And I make bold to tell you, Lord Fawn, that you are not behaving to me like a man of honour. I shall now leave the matter in the hands of my cousin, Mr.

Greystock." Then she sailed out of the room, and Lord Fawn was driven to escape from the house as he might. He stood about the room for five minutes with his hat in his hand, and then walked down and let himself out of the front door.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DIAMONDS BECOME TROUBLESOME.

The 30th of July came round, and Lizzie was prepared for her journey down to Scotland. She was to be accompanied by Miss Macnulty and her own maid and her own servants, and to travel of course like a grand lady. She had not seen Lord Fawn since the meeting recorded in the last chapter, but had seen her cousin Frank nearly every other day. He, after much consideration, had written a long letter to Lord Fawn, in which he had given that nobleman to understand that some explanation was required as to conduct which Frank described as being to him "at present unintelligible." He then went at considerable length into the matter of the diamonds, with the object of proving that Lord Fawn could have no possible right to interfere in the matter. And though he had from the first wished that Lizzie would give up the trinket, he made various points in her favour. Not only had they been given to his cousin by her late husband; but even had they not been so given, they would have been hers by will. Sir Florian had left her everything that was within the walls of Portray Castle, and the diamonds had been at Portray at the time of Sir Florian's death. Such was Frank's statement — untrue indeed, but believed by him to be true. This was one of Lizzie's lies, forged as soon as she understood that some subsidiary claim

might be made upon them on the ground that they formed a portion of property left by will away from her; some claim subsidiary to the grand claim, that the necklace was a family heirloom. Lord Fawn was not in the least shaken in his conviction that Lizzie had behaved, and was behaving badly, and that, therefore, he had better get rid of her; but he knew that he must be very wary in the reasons he would give for jilting her. He wrote, therefore, a very short note to Greystock, promising that any explanation needed should be given as soon as circumstances should admit of his forming a decision. In the mean time the 30th of July came, and Lady Eustace was ready for her journey.

There is, or there was, a train leaving London for Carlisle at eleven A. M., by which Lizzie purposed to travel, so that she might sleep in that city and go on through Dumfries to Portray the next morning. This was her scheme; but there was another part of her scheme as to which she had felt much doubt. Should she leave the diamonds, or should she take them with her? The iron box in which they were kept was small, and so far portable that a strong man might carry it without much trouble. Indeed, Lizzie could move it from one part of the room to the other, and she had often done so. But it was so heavy that it could not be taken with her without attracting attention. The servant would know what it was, and the porter would know, and Miss Macnulty would know. That her own maid should know was a matter of course; but even to her own maid the journey of the jewels would be remarkable because of the weight of the box, whereas if they went with her other jewels in her dressing-case, there would be nothing remark-

able. She might even have taken them in her pocket, had she dared. But she did not dare. Though she was intelligent and courageous, she was wonderfully ignorant as to what might and what might not be done for the recovery of the necklace by Mr. Camperdown. She did not dare to take them without the iron box, and at last she decided that the box should go. At a little after ten, her own carriage — the job-carriage, which was now about to perform its last journey in her service — was at the door, and a cab was there for the servants. The luggage was brought down, and with the larger boxes was brought the iron case with the necklace. The servant, certainly making more of the weight than he need have done, deposited it as a foot-stool for Lizzie, who then seated herself, and was followed by Miss Macnulty. She would have it placed in the same way beneath her feet in the railway carriage, and again brought into her room at the Carlisle Hotel. What though the porter did know! There was nothing illegal in travelling about with a heavy iron box full of diamonds, and the risk would be less this way, she thought, than were she to leave them behind her in London. The house in Mount street, which she had taken for the season, was to be given up; and whom could she trust in London? Her very bankers, she feared, would have betrayed her, and given up her treasure to Mr. Camperdown. As for Messrs. Harter & Benjamin, she felt sure that they would be bribed by Mr. Camperdown. She once thought of asking her cousin to take the charge of them, but she could not bring herself to let them out of her own hands. Ten thousand pounds! If she could only sell them and get the money, from what a world of trouble would she be

relieved. And the sale, for another reason, would have been convenient; for Lady Eustace was already a little in debt. But she could not sell them, and therefore when she got into the carriage there was the box under her feet.

At that very moment who should appear on the pavement, standing between the carriage and the house-door, but Mr. Camperdown? And with Mr. Camperdown there was another man — a very suspicious-looking man, whom Lizzie at once took to be a detective officer of police. "Lady Eustace!" said Mr. Camperdown, taking off his hat. Lizzie bowed across Miss Macnulty, and endeavoured to restrain the tell-tale blood from flying to her cheeks. "I believe," said Mr. Camperdown, "that you are now starting for Scotland."

"We are, Mr. Camperdown; and we are very late."

"Could you allow me two minutes' conversation with you in the house?"

"Oh dear, no. We are late, I tell you. What a time you have chosen for coming, Mr. Camperdown!"

"It is an awkward hour, Lady Eustace. I only heard this morning that you were going so soon, and it is imperative that I should see you."

"Had you not better write, Mr. Camperdown?"

"You will never answer my letters, Madame."

"I — I — I really cannot see you now. William, the coachman must drive on. We cannot allow ourselves to lose the train. I am really very sorry, Mr. Camperdown, but we must not lose the train."

"Lady Eustace," said Mr. Camperdown, putting his hand on the carriage-door, and so demeaning himself that the coachman did not dare to drive on, "I must

ask you a question." He spoke in a low voice, but he was speaking across Miss Macnulty. That lady, therefore, heard him, and so did William, the servant, who was standing close to the door. "I must insist on knowing where are the Eustace diamonds." Lizzie felt the box beneath her feet, and, without showing that she did so, somewhat widened her drapery.

"I can tell you nothing now. William, make the coachman drive on."

"If you will not answer me, I must tell you that I shall be driven in the execution of my duty to obtain a search-warrant, in order that they may be placed in proper custody. They are not your property, and must be taken out of your hands."

Lizzie looked at the suspicious man with a frightened gaze. The suspicious man was, in fact, a very respectable clerk in Mr. Camperdown's employment, but Lizzie for a moment felt that the search was about to begin at once. She had hardly understood the threat, and thought that the attorney was already armed with the powers of which he spoke. She glanced for a moment at Miss Macnulty, and then at the servant. Would they betray her? If they chose to use force to her, the box certainly might be taken from her. "I know I shall lose the train," she said. "I know I shall. I must insist that you let my servant drive on." There was now a little crowd of a dozen persons on the pavement, and there was nothing to cover her diamonds but the skirt of her travelling-dress.

"Are they in this house, Lady Eustace?"

"Why does n't he go on?" shouted Lizzie. "You have no right, sir, to stop me. I won't be stopped."

"Or have you got them with you?"

"I shall answer no questions. You have no right to treat me in this way."

"Then I shall be forced, on behalf of the family, to obtain a search-warrant, both here and in Ayrshire, and proceedings will be taken also against your ladyship personally." So saying, Mr. Camperdown withdrew, and at last the carriage was driven on.

As it happened, there was time enough for catching the train, and to spare. The whole affair in Mount street had taken less than ten minutes. But the effect upon Lizzie was very severe. For a while she could not speak, and at last she burst out into hysteric tears — not a sham fit, but a true convulsive agony of sobbing. All the world of Mount street, including her own servants, had heard the accusation against her. During the whole morning she had been wishing that she had never seen the diamonds; but now it was almost impossible that she should part with them. And yet they were like a load upon her chest, a load as heavy as though she was compelled to sit with the iron box on her lap day and night. In her sobbing she felt the thing under her feet and knew that she could not get rid of it. She hated the box, and yet she must cling to it now. She was thoroughly ashamed of the box, and yet she must seem to take a pride in it. She was horribly afraid of the box, and yet she must keep it in her own very bedroom. And what should she say about the box now to Miss Macnulty, who sat by her side, stiff and scornful, offering her smelling-bottles, but not offering her sympathy? "My dear," she at said last, "that horrid man has quite upset me."

"I don't wonder that you should be upset," said Miss Macnulty.

"And so unjust, too — so false — so — so — so —— They are my own as much as that umbrella is yours, Miss Macnulty."

"I don't know," said Miss Macnulty.

"But I tell you," said Lizzie.

"What I mean is, that it is such a pity there should be a doubt."

"There is no doubt," said Lizzie; "how dare you say there is a doubt? My cousin, Mr. Greystock, says that there is not the slightest doubt. He is a barrister, and must know better than an attorney like that Mr. Camperdown." By this time they were at the Euston Square station, and then there was more trouble with the box. The footman struggled with it into the waiting-room, and the porter struggled with it from the waiting-room to the carriage. Lizzie could not but look at the porter as he carried it, and she felt sure that the man had been told of its contents and was struggling with the express view of adding to her annoyance. The same thing happened at Carlisle, where the box was carried up into Lizzie's bedroom by the footman, and where she was convinced that her treasure had become the subject of conversation for the whole house. In the morning people looked at her as she walked down the long platform with the box still struggling before her. She almost wished that she had undertaken its carriage herself, as she thought that even she could have managed with less outward show of effort. Her own servants seemed to be in league against her, and Miss Macnulty had never before been so generally unpleasant. Poor Miss Macnulty, who had a conscientious idea of doing her duty, and who always attempted to give an adequate return for the bread she

ate, could not so far overcome the effect of Mr. Camperdown's visit as to speak on any subject without being stiff and hard. And she suffered, too, from the box, to such a degree that she turned over in her mind the thought of leaving Lizzie if any other possible home might be found for her. Who would willingly live with a woman who always travelled about with a diamond necklace worth ten thousand pounds, locked up in an iron safe — and that necklace not her own property?

But at last Lady Eustace, and Miss Macnulty, and the servants — and the iron box — reached Portray Castle in safety.

CHAPTER XXI.

"IANTHE'S SOUL."

Lady Eustace had been rather cross on the journey down to Scotland, and had almost driven the unfortunate Macnulty to think that Lady Linlithgow or the workhouse would be better than this young tyrant; but on her arrival at her own house she was for a while all smiles and kindness. During the journey she had been angry without thought, but was almost entitled to be excused for her anger. Could Miss Macnulty have realised the amount of oppression inflicted on her patroness by the box of diamonds, she would have forgiven anything. Hitherto there had been some secrecy, or at any rate some privacy, attached to the matter; but now that odious lawyer had discussed the matter aloud, in the very streets, in the presence of servants, and Lady Eustace had felt that it was discussed also by every porter on the railway from London down to Troon, the station in Scotland at which her own carriage met her to take her to her own castle. The night at Carlisle had been terrible to her, and the diamonds had never been for a moment off her mind. Perhaps the worst of it all was that her own man-servant and maid-servant had heard the claim which had been so violently made by Mr. Camperdown. There are people in that respect very fortunately circumstanced, whose servants, as a matter of course, know all their

affairs, have an interest in their concerns, sympathise with their demands, feel their wants, and are absolutely at one with them. But in such cases the servants are really known, and are almost as completely a part of the family as the sons and daughters. There may be disruptions and quarrels; causes may arise for ending the existing condition of things; but while this condition lasts the servants in such households are for the most part only too well inclined to fight the battles of their employers. Mr. Binns, the butler, would almost foam at the mouth if it were suggested to him that the plate at Silvercup Hall was not the undoubted property of the old squire; and Mrs. Pouncebox could not be made to believe, by any amount of human evidence, that the jewels which her lady has worn for the last fifteen years are not her ladyship's very own. Binns would fight for the plate, and so would Pouncebox for the jewels, almost till they were cut to pieces. The preservation of these treasures on behalf of those who paid them their wages and fed them, who occasionally scolded them, but always succoured them, would be their point of honour. No torture would get the key of the cellar from Binns; no threats extract from Pouncebox a secret of the toilet. But poor Lizzie Eustace had no Binns and no Pouncebox. They are plants that grow slowly. There was still too much of the mushroom about Lady Eustace to permit of her possessing such treasures. Her footman was six feet high, was not bad-looking, and was called Thomas. She knew no more about him, and was far too wise to expect sympathy from him, or other aid than the work for which she paid him.

Her own maid was somewhat nearer to her; but not much nearer. The girl's name was Patience Crabstick, and she could do hair well. Lizzie knew but little more of her than that.

Lizzie considered herself to be still engaged to be married to Lord Fawn, but there was no sympathy to be had in that quarter. Frank Greystock might be induced to sympathise with her, but hardly after the fashion which Lizzie desired. And then sympathy in that direction would be so dangerous should she decide upon going on with the Fawn marriage. For the present she had quarrelled with Lord Fawn; but the very bitterness of that quarrel, and the decision with which her betrothed had declared his intention of breaking off the match, made her the more resolute that she would marry him. During her journey to Portray she had again determined that he should be her husband; and, if so, advanced sympathy — sympathy that would be pleasantly tender with her cousin Frank — would be dangerous. She would be quite willing to accept even Miss Macnulty's sympathy if that humble lady would give it to her of the kind she wanted. She declared to herself that she could pour herself out on Miss Macnulty's bosom, and mingle her tears even with Miss Macnulty's if only Miss Macnulty would believe in her. If Miss Macnulty would be enthusiastic about the jewels, enthusiastic as to the wickedness of Lord Fawn, enthusiastic in praising Lizzie herself, Lizzie — so she told herself — would have showered all the sweets of female friendship even on Miss Macnulty's head. But Miss Macnulty was as hard as a deal board. She did as she was bidden, thereby earning her bread. But there was no

tenderness in her; no delicacy; no feeling; no comprehension. It was thus that Lady Eustace judged her humble companion; and in one respect she judged her rightly. Miss Macnulty did not believe in Lady Eustace, and was not sufficiently gifted to act up to a belief which she did not entertain.

Poor Lizzie! The world, in judging of people who are false, and bad, and selfish, and prosperous to outward appearances, is apt to be hard upon them, and to forget the punishments which generally accompany such faults. Lizzie Eustace was very false, and bad, and selfish, and, we may say, very prosperous also; but in the midst of all she was thoroughly uncomfortable. She was never at ease. There was no green spot in her life with which she could be contented. And though, after a fashion, she knew herself to be false and bad, she was thoroughly convinced that she was ill-used by everybody about her. She was being very badly treated by Lord Fawn; but she flattered herself that she would be able to make Lord Fawn know more of her character before she had done with him.

Portray Castle was really a castle, not simply a country mansion so called, but a stone edifice with battlements and a round tower at one corner, and a gate which looked as if it might have had a portcullis, and narrow windows in a portion of it, and a cannon mounted upon a low roof, and an excavation called the moat, but which was now a fantastic and somewhat picturesque garden, running round two sides of it. In very truth, though a portion of the castle was undoubtedly old and had been built when strength was needed for defence and probably for the custody of booty, the battlements, and the round tower,

and the awe-inspiring gateway had all been added by one of the late Sir Florians. But the castle looked like a castle, and was interesting. As a house it was not particularly eligible, the castle form of domestic architecture being exigent in its nature, and demanding that space, which in less ambitious houses can be applied to comfort, shall be surrendered to magnificence. There was a great hall, and a fine dining-room, with plate-glass windows looking out upon the sea; but the other sitting-rooms were insignificant, and the bedrooms were here and there, and were for the most part small and dark. That, however, which Lizzie had appropriated to her own use was a grand chamber, looking also out upon the open sea.

The castle stood upon a bluff of land, with a fine prospect of the Firth of Clyde, and with a distant view of the Isle of Arran. When the air was clear, as it often is clear there, the Arran hills could be seen from Lizzie's window, and she was proud of talking of the prospect. In other respects, perhaps, the castle was somewhat desolate. There were a few stunted trees around it, but timber had not prospered there. There was a grand kitchen garden, or rather a kitchen garden which had been intended to be grand; but since Lizzie's reign had been commenced, the grandeur had been neglected. Grand kitchen gardens are expensive, and Lizzie had at once been firm in reducing the under-gardeners from five men to one and a boy. The head gardener had of course left her at once; but that had not broken her heart, and she had hired a modest man at a guinea a week instead of a scientific artist, who was by no means modest, with a hundred and twenty pounds a year, and coals, house, milk, and

all other horticultural luxuries. Though Lizzie was prosperous and had a fine income, she was already aware that she could not keep up a town and country establishment and be a rich woman on four thousand a year. There was a flower garden and small shrubbery within the so-called moat; but, otherwise, the grounds of Portray Castle were not alluring. The place was sombre, exposed, and in winter very cold; and except that the expanse of sea beneath the hill on which stood the castle was fine and open, it had no great claim to praise on the score of scenery. Behind the castle, and away from the sea, the low mountains belonging to the estate stretched for some eight or ten miles; and toward the further end of them, where stood a shooting-lodge, called always The Cottage, the landscape became rough and grand. It was in this cottage that Frank Greystock was to be sheltered with his friend, when he came down to shoot what Lady Eustace had called her three annual grouse.

She ought to have been happy and comfortable. There will, of course, be some to say that a young widow should not be happy and comfortable — that she should be weeping her lost lord, and subject to the desolation of bereavement. But as the world goes now, young widows are not miserable; and there is, perhaps, a growing tendency in society to claim from them year by year still less of any misery that may be avoidable. Suttee propensities of all sorts, from burning alive down to bombazine and hideous forms of clothing, are becoming less and less popular among the nations, and women are beginning to learn that, let what misfortunes will come upon them, it is well for them to be as happy as their nature will allow

them to be. A woman may thoroughly respect her husband, and mourn him truly, honestly, with her whole heart, and yet enjoy thoroughly the good things which he has left behind for her use. It was not, at any rate, sorrow for the lost Sir Florian that made Lady Eustace uncomfortable. She had her child. She had her income. She had her youth and beauty. She had Portray Castle. She had a new lover, and, if she chose to be quit of him, not liking him well enough for the purpose, she might undoubtedly have another whom she would like better. She had hitherto been thoroughly successful in her life. And yet she was unhappy. What was it that she wanted?

She had been a very clever child — a clever, crafty child; and now she was becoming a clever woman. Her craft remained with her; but so keen was her outlook upon the world, that she was beginning to perceive that craft, let it be never so crafty, will in the long run miss its own object. She actually envied the simplicity of Lucy Morris, for whom she delighted to find evil names, calling her demure, a prig, a sly puss, and so on. But she could see — or half see — that Lucy with her simplicity was stronger than was she with her craft. She had nearly captivated Frank Greystock with her wiles, but without any wiles Lucy had captivated him altogether. And a man captivated by wiles was only captivated for a time, whereas a man won by simplicity would be won for ever — if he himself were worth the winning. And this too she felt — that let her success be what it might, she could not be happy unless she could win a man's heart. She had won Sir Florian's, but that had been but for an hour — for a month or two. And then Sir Florian had never

really won hers. Could not she be simple? Could not she act simplicity so well that the thing acted should be as powerful as the thing itself; perhaps even more powerful? Poor Lizzie Eustace! In thinking over all this she saw a great deal. It was wonderful that she should see so much and tell herself so many home truths. But there was one truth she could not see, and therefore could not tell it to herself. She had not a heart to give. It had become petrified during those lessons of early craft in which she had taught herself how to get the better of Messrs. Harter & Benjamin, of Sir Florian Eustace, of Lady Linlithgow, and of Mr. Camperdown.

Her ladyship had now come down to her country house, leaving London and all its charms before the end of the season, actuated by various motives. In the first place, the house in Mount street was taken furnished, by the month, and the servants were hired after the same fashion, and the horses jobbed. Lady Eustace was already sufficiently intimate with her accounts to know that she would save two hundred pounds by not remaining another month or three weeks in London, and sufficiently observant of her own affairs to have perceived that such saving was needed. And then it appeared to her that her battle with Lord Fawn could be better fought from a distance than at close quarters. London, too, was becoming absolutely distasteful to her. There were many things there that tended to make her unhappy, and so few that she could enjoy. She was afraid of Mr. Camperdown, and ever on the rack lest some dreadful thing should come upon her in respect of the necklace, some horrible paper served upon her from a magistrate, ordering her ap-

pearance at Newgate, or perhaps before the Lord Chancellor, or a visit from policemen who would be empowered to search for and carry off the iron box. And then there was so little in her London life to gratify her! It is pleasant to win in a fight; but to be always fighting is not pleasant. Except in those moments, few and far between, in which she was alone with her cousin Frank — and perhaps in those other moments in which she wore her diamonds — she had but little in London that she enjoyed. She still thought that a time would come when it would be otherwise. Under these influences she had actually made herself believe that she was sighing for the country, and for solitude; for the wide expanse of her own bright waves — as she had called them — and for the rocks of dear Portray. She had told Miss Macnulty and Augusta Fawn that she thirsted for the breezes of Ayrshire, so that she might return to her books and her thoughts. Amid the whirl of London it was impossible either to read or to think. And she believed it too herself. She so believed it that on the first morning of her arrival she took a little volume in her pocket, containing Shelley's "Queen Mab," and essayed to go down upon the rocks. She had actually breakfasted at nine, and was out on the sloping grounds below the castle before ten, having made some boast to Miss Macnulty about the morning air.

She scrambled down, not very far down, but a little way beneath the garden gate, to a spot on which a knob of rock cropped out from the scanty herbage of the incipient cliff. Fifty yards lower the real rocks began; and, though the real rocks were not very rocky, not precipitous or even bold, and were partially covered

with salt-fed mosses down almost to the sea, nevertheless they justified her in talking about her rock-bound shore. The shore was hers, for her life, and it was rock-bound. This knob she had espied from her windows; and, indeed, had been thinking of it for the last week, as a place appropriate to solitude and Shelley. She had stood on it before, and had stretched her arms with enthusiasm toward the just-visible mountains of Arran. On that occasion the weather, perhaps, had been cool; but now a blazing sun was overhead, and when she had been seated half a minute, and "Queen Mab" had been withdrawn from her pocket, she found that it would not do. It would not do even with the canopy she could make for herself with her parasol. So she stood up and looked about herself for shade; for shade in some spot in which she could still look out upon "her dear wide ocean with its glittering smile." For it was thus that she would talk about the mouth of the Clyde. Shelter near her there was none. The scrubby trees lay nearly half a mile to the right, and up the hill too. She had once clambered down to the actual shore, and might do so again. But she doubted that there would be shelter even there; and the clambering up on that former occasion had been a nuisance, and would be a worse nuisance now. Thinking of all this, and feeling the sun keenly, she gradually retraced her steps to the garden within the moat, and seated herself, Shelley in hand, within the summer-house. The bench was narrow, hard, and broken; and there were some snails which discomposed her; but, nevertheless, she would make the best of it. Her darling "Queen Mab" must be read without the coarse, inappropriate, every-day surroundings of a drawing-

room; and it was now manifest to her that unless she could get up much earlier in the morning, or come out to her reading after sunset, the knob of rock would not avail her.

She began her reading, resolved that she would enjoy her poetry in spite of the narrow seat. She had often talked of "Queen Mab," and perhaps she thought she had read it. This, however, was in truth her first attempt at that work. "How wonderful is Death, Death and his brother Sleep." Then she half-closed the volume, and thought that she enjoyed the idea. Death — and his brother Sleep! She did not know why they should be more wonderful than Action, or Life, or Thought; but the words were of a nature which would enable her to remember them, and they would be good for quoting. "Sudden arose Ianthe's soul; it stood all beautiful in naked purity." The name of Ianthe suited her exactly. And the antithesis conveyed to her mind by naked purity struck her strongly, and she determined to learn the passage by heart. Eight or nine lines were printed separately, like a stanza, and the labour would not be great, and the task, when done, would be complete. "Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace, Each stain of earthliness Had passed away, it resumed Its native dignity, and stood Immortal amid ruin." Which was instinct with beauty, the stain or the soul, she did not stop to inquire, and may be excused for not understanding. "Ah," she exclaimed to herself, "how true it is; how one feels it; how it comes home to one! — 'Sudden arose Ianthe's soul.'" And then she walked about the garden, repeating the words to herself, and almost forgetting the heat. "'Each stain of earthliness had

passed away.' Ha; yes. They will pass away and become instinct with beauty and grace." A dim idea came upon her that when this happy time should arrive, no one would claim her necklace from her, and that the man at the stables would not be so disagreeably punctual in sending in his bill. "'All beautiful in naked purity!'" What a tawdry world was this in which clothes and food and houses are necessary! How perfectly that boy poet had understood it all. "'Immortal amid ruin!'" She liked the idea of the ruin almost as well as that of the immortality, and the stains quite as well as the purity. As immortality must come, and as stains were instinct with grace, why be afraid of ruin? But then, if people go wrong — at least women — they are not asked out anywhere! "'Sudden arose Ianthe's soul; it stood all beautiful ——.'" And so the piece was learned, and Lizzie felt that she had devoted her hour to poetry in a quite rapturous manner. At any rate she had a bit to quote; and though in truth she did not understand the exact bearing of the image, she had so studied her gestures and so modulated her voice, that she knew that she could be effective. She did not then care to carry her reading further, but returned with the volume into the house. Though the passage about Ianthe's soul comes very early in the work, she was now quite familiar with the poem, and when in after days she spoke of it as a thing of beauty that she had made her own by long study, she actually did not know that she was lying. As she grew older, however, she quickly became wiser, and was aware that in learning one passage of a poem it is expedient to select one in the middle or at the end. The world is so cruelly observant nowadays that

even men and women who have not themselves read their "Queen Mab" will know from what part of the poem a morsel is extracted, and will not give you credit for a page beyond that from which your passage comes.

After lunch Lizzie invited Miss Macnulty to sit at the open window of the drawing-room and look out upon the "glittering waves." In giving Miss Macnulty her due we must acknowledge that, though she owned no actual cleverness herself, had no cultivated tastes, read but little, and that little of a colourless kind, and thought nothing of her hours but that she might get rid of them and live, yet she had a certain power of insight, and could see a thing. Lizzie Eustace was utterly powerless to impose upon her. Such as Lizzie was, Miss Macnulty was willing to put up with her and accept her bread. The people whom she had known had been either worthless — as had been her own father, or cruel — like Lady Linlithgow, or false — as was Lady Eustace. Miss Macnulty knew that worthlessness, cruelty, and falseness had to be endured by such as she. And she could bear them without caring much about them; not condemning them, even within her own heart, very heavily. But she was strangely deficient in this, that she could not call these qualities by other names, even to the owners of them. She was unable to pretend to believe Lizzie's rhapsodies. It was hardly conscience or a grand spirit of truth that actuated her, as much as a want of the courage needed for lying. She had not had the face to call old Lady Linlithgow kind, and therefore old Lady Linlithgow had turned her out of the house. When Lady Eustace called on her for sympathy, she had not courage

enough to dare to attempt the bit of acting which would be necessary for sympathetic expression. She was like a dog or a child, and was unable not to be true. Lizzie was longing for a little mock sympathy — was longing to show off her Shelley, and was very kind to Miss Macnulty when she got the poor lady into the recess of the window. "This is nice; is it not?" she said, as she spread her hand out through the open space toward the "wide expanse of glittering waves."

"Very nice, only it glares so," said Miss Macnulty.

"Ah, I love the full warmth of the real summer. With me it always seems that the sun is needed to bring to true ripeness the fruit of the heart." Nevertheless she had been much troubled both by the heat and by the midges when she tried to sit on the stone. "I always think of those few glorious days which I passed with my darling Florian at Naples; days too glorious because they were so few." Now Miss Macnulty knew some of the history of those days and of their glory, and knew also how the widow had borne her loss.

"I suppose the bay of Naples is fine," she said.

"It is not only the bay. There are scenes there which ravish you, only it is necessary that there should be some one with you that can understand you. 'Soul of Ianthe!'" she said, meaning to apostrophise that of the deceased Sir Florian. "You have read 'Queen Mab'?"

"I don't know that I ever did. If I have, I have forgotten it."

"Ah, you should read it. I know nothing in the English language that brings home to one so often one's own best feelings and aspirations. 'It stands all

beautiful in naked purity,'" she continued, still alluding to poor Sir Florian's soul. "'Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace, each stain of earthliness had passed away.' I can see him now in all his manly beauty, as we used to sit together by the hour, looking over the waters. Oh, Julia, the thing itself has gone, the earthly reality; but the memory of it will live forever."

"He was a very handsome man certainly," said Miss Macnulty, finding herself forced to say something.

"I see him now," she went on, still gazing out upon the shining water. "'It reassumed its native dignity and stood primeval amid ruin.' Is not that a glorious idea, gloriously worded?" She had forgotten one word and used a wrong epithet; but it sounded just as well. Primeval seemed to her to be a very poetical word.

"To tell the truth," said Miss Macnulty, "I never understand poetry when it is quoted unless I happen to know the passage beforehand. I think I 'll go away from this, for the light is too much for my poor old eyes." Certainly Miss Macnulty had fallen into a profession for which she was not suited.

CHAPTER XXII.

LADY EUSTACE PROCURES A PONY FOR THE USE OF HER COUSIN.

Lady Eustace could make nothing of Miss Macnulty in the way of sympathy, and could not bear her disappointment with patience. It was hardly to be expected that she should do so. She paid a great deal for Miss Macnulty. In a moment of rash generosity, and at a time when she hardly knew what money meant, she had promised Miss Macnulty seventy pounds for the first year and seventy for the second, should the arrangement last longer than a twelvemonth. The second year had been now commenced, and Lady Eustace was beginning to think that seventy pounds was a great deal of money when so very little was given in return. Lady Linlithgow had paid her dependent no fixed salary. And then there was the lady's "keep" and first-class travelling when they went up and down to Scotland, and cab-fares in London when it was desirable that Miss Macnulty should absent herself. Lizzie, reckoning all up, and thinking that for so much her friend ought to be ready to discuss Ianthe's soul, or any other kindred subject, at a moment's warning, would become angry and would tell herself that she was being swindled out of her money. She knew how necessary it was that she should have some companion at the present emergency of her life, and therefore

could not at once send Miss Macnulty away; but she would sometimes become very cross and would tell poor Macnulty that she was — a fool. Upon the whole, however, to be called a fool was less objectionable to Miss Macnulty than were demands for sympathy which she did not know how to give.

Those first ten days of August went very slowly with Lady Eustace. "Queen Mab" got itself poked away, and was heard of no more. But there were other books. A huge box full of novels had come down, and Miss Macnulty was a great devourer of novels. If Lady Eustace would talk to her about the sorrows of the poorest heroine that ever saw her lover murdered before her eyes, and then come to life again with ten thousand pounds a year, for a period of three weeks — or till another heroine, who had herself been murdered, obliterated the former horrors from her plastic mind — Miss Macnulty could discuss the catastrophe with the keenest interest. And Lizzie, finding herself to be, as she told herself, unstrung, fell also into novel-reading. She had intended during this vacant time to master the "Fairy Queen"; but the "Fairy Queen" fared even worse than "Queen Mab"; and the studies of Portray Castle were confined to novels. For poor Macnulty, if she could only be left alone, this was well enough. To have her meals, and her daily walk, and her fill of novels, and to be left alone, was all that she asked of the gods. But it was not so with Lady Eustace. She asked much more than that, and was now thoroughly discontented with her own idleness. She was sure that she could have read Spenser from sunrise to sundown, with no other break than an hour or two given to Shelley, if only there had been some one to sympathise

with her in her readings. But there was no one, and she was very cross. Then there came a letter to her from her cousin, which for that morning brought some life back to the castle. "I have seen Lord Fawn," said the letter, "and I have also seen Mr. Camperdown. As it would be very hard to explain what took place at these interviews by letter, and as I shall be at Portray Castle on the 20th, I will not make the attempt. We shall go down by the night train, and I will get over to you as soon as I have dressed and had my breakfast. I suppose I can find some kind of a pony for the journey. The 'we' consists of myself and my friend Mr. Herriot, a man whom I think you will like, if you will condescend to see him, though he is a barrister like myself. You need express no immediate condescension in his favour, as I shall of course come over alone on Wednesday morning. Yours always affectionately, F. G."

The letter she received on the Sunday morning, and as the Wednesday named for Frank's coming was the next Wednesday, and was close at hand, she was in rather a better humour than she had displayed since the poets had failed her. "What a blessing it will be," she said, "to have somebody to speak to."

This was not complimentary, but Miss Macnulty did not want compliments. "Yes, indeed," she said. "Of course you will be glad to see your cousin."

"I shall be glad to see anything in the shape of a man. I declare I have felt almost inclined to ask the minister from Craigie to elope with me."

"He has got seven children," said Miss Macnulty.

"Yes, poor man, and a wife, and not more than enough to live upon. I daresay he would have come.

By the by, I wonder whether there 's a pony about the place."

"A pony!" Miss Macnulty of course supposed that it was needed for the purpose of the suggested elopement.

"Yes; I suppose you know what a pony is? Of course there ought to be a shooting pony at the cottage for these men. My poor head has so many things to work upon that I had forgotten it; and you 're never any good at thinking of things."

"I did n't know that gentlemen wanted ponies for shooting."

"I wonder what you do know? Of course there must be a pony."

"I suppose you 'll want two?"

"No, I sha'n't. You don't suppose that men always go riding about. But I want one. What had I better do?" Miss Macnulty suggested that Gowran should be consulted. Now Gowran was the steward, and bailiff, and manager, and factotum about the place, who bought a cow or sold one if occasion required, and saw that nobody stole anything, and who knew the boundaries of the farms, and all about the tenants, and looked after the pipes when frost came, and was an honest, domineering, hard-working, intelligent Scotchman, who had been brought up to love the Eustaces, and who hated his present mistress with all his heart. He did not leave her service, having an idea in his mind that it was now the great duty of his life to save Portray from her ravages. Lizzie fully returned the compliment of the hatred, and was determined to rid herself of Andy Gowran's services as soon as possible. He had been called Andy by the late Sir Florian, and,

though every one else about the place called him Mr. Gowran, Lady Eustace thought it became her, as the man's mistress, to treat him as he had been treated by the late master. So she called him Andy. But she was resolved to get rid of him, as soon as she should dare. There were things which it was essential that somebody about the place should know, and no one knew them but Mr. Gowran. Every servant in the castle might rob her, were it not for the protection afforded by Mr. Gowran. In that affair of the garden it was Mr. Gowran who had enabled her to conquer the horticultural Leviathan who had oppressed her, and who, in point of wages, had been a much bigger man than Mr. Gowran himself. She trusted Mr. Gowran and hated him, whereas Mr. Gowran hated her, and did not trust her.

"I believe you think that nothing can be done at Portray except by that man," said Lady Eustace.

"He 'll know how much you ought to pay for the pony."

"Yes, and get some brute not fit for my cousin to ride, on purpose, perhaps, to break his neck."

"Then I should ask Mr. Macallum, the postmaster of Troon, for I have seen three or four very quiet-looking ponies standing in the carts at his door."

"Macnulty, if there ever was an idiot you are one," said Lady Eustace, throwing up her hands. "To think that I should get a pony for my cousin Frank out of one of the mail carts."

"I daresay I am an idiot," said Miss Macnulty, resuming her novel.

Lady Eustace was, of course, obliged to have recourse to Gowran, to whom she applied on the Monday

morning. Not even Lizzie Eustace, on behalf of her cousin Frank, would have dared to disturb Mr. Gowran with considerations respecting a pony on the Sabbath. On the Monday morning she found Mr. Gowran superintending four boys and three old women, who were making a bit of her ladyship's hay on the ground above the castle. The ground about the castle was poor and exposed, and her ladyship's hay was apt to be late.

"Andy," she said, "I shall want to get a pony for the gentlemen who are coming to the cottage. It must be there by Tuesday evening."

"A pownie, my leddie?"

"Yes; a pony. I suppose a pony may be purchased in Ayrshire, though of all places in the world it seems to have the fewest of the comforts of life."

"Them as find it like that, my leddie, need n't bide there."

"Never mind. You will have the kindness to have a pony purchased and put into the stables of the cottage on Tuesday afternoon. There are stables, no doubt."

"Oh, ay, there 's shelter, nae doot, for mair pownies than they 's ride. When the cottage was biggit, my leddie, there was nae cause for sparing nowt." Andy Gowran was continually throwing her comparative poverty in poor Lizzie's teeth, and there was nothing he could do which displeased her more.

"And I need n't spare my cousin the use of a pony," she said grandiloquently, but feeling as she did so that she was exposing herself before the man. "You 'll have the goodness to procure one for him on Tuesday."

"But there ain't aits nor yet fother, nor nowt for bedding down. And wha 's to tent the pownie?

There 's mair in keeping a pownie than your leddyship thinks. It 'll be a matter of auchten and saxpence a week, will a pownie." Mr. Gowran, as he expressed his prudential scruples, put a very strong emphasis indeed on the sixpence.

"Very well. Let it be so."

"And there 'll be the beastie to buy, my leddie. He 'll be —— a lump of money, my leddie. Pownies ain't to be had for nowt in Ayrshire, as was ance, my leddie."

"Of course, I must pay for him."

"He 'll be a matter of —— ten pound, my leddie."

"Very well."

"Or may be twal; just as likely." And Mr. Gowran shook his head at his mistress in a most uncomfortable way. It was not strange that she should hate him.

"You must give the proper price — of course."

"There ain't no proper prices for pownies — as there is for jew'ls and sich like." If this was intended for sarcasm upon Lady Eustace in regard to her diamonds, Mr. Gowran ought to have been dismissed on the spot. In such a case no English jury would have given him his current wages. "And he 'll be to sell again, my leddie?"

"We shall see about that afterwards."

"Ye 'll never let him eat his head off there a' the winter! He 'll be to sell. And the gentles 'll ride him, may be, ance across the hillside, out and back. As to the grouse, they can't cotch them with the pownie, for there ain't none to cotch." There had been two keepers on the mountains — men who were paid five or six shillings a week to look after the game in addition to their other callings, and one of these had been

sent away, actually in obedience to Gowran's advice; so that this blow was cruel and unmanly. He made it, too, as severe as he could by another shake of his head.

"Do you mean to tell me that my cousin cannot be supplied with an animal to ride upon?"

"My leddie, I've said nowt o' the kind. There ain't no useful animal as I kens the name and nature of as he can't have in Ayrshire — for paying for it, my leddie; horse, pownie, or ass, just whichever you please, my leddie. But there'll be a seddle——"

"A what?"

There can be no doubt that Gowran purposely slurred the word so that his mistress should not understand him. "Seddles don't come for now, my leddie, though it be Ayrshire."

"I don't understand what it is that you say, Andy."

"A seddle, my leddie," said he, shouting the word at her at the top of his voice — "and a briddle. I suppose as your leddyship's cousin don't ride bareback up in Lunnon?"

"Of course there must be the necessary horse-furniture," said Lady Eustace, retiring to the castle. Andy Gowran had certainly ill-used her, and she swore that she would have revenge. Nor when she was informed on the Tuesday that an adequate pony had been hired for eighteen pence a day, saddle, bridle, groom, and all included, was her heart at all softened towards Mr. Gowran.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FRANK GREYSTOCK'S FIRST VISIT TO PORTRAY.

Had Frank Greystock known all that his cousin endured for his comfort, would he have been grateful? Women, when they are fond of men, do think much of men's comfort in small matters, and men are apt to take the good things provided almost as a matter of course. When Frank Greystock and Herriot reached the cottage about nine o'clock in the morning, having left London over night by the limited mail train, the pony at once presented itself to them. It was a little shaggy, black beast, with a boy almost as shaggy as itself, but they were both good of their kind. "Oh, you're the laddie with the pownie, are you?" said Frank, in answer to an announcement made to him by the boy. He did at once perceive that Lizzie had taken notice of the word in his note in which he had suggested that some means of getting over to Portray would be needed, and he learned from the fact that she was thinking of him and anxious to see him.

His friend was a man a couple of years younger than himself, who had hitherto achieved no success at the bar, but who was nevertheless a clever, diligent, well-instructed man. He was what the world calls penniless, having an income from his father just sufficient to keep him like a gentleman. He was not much known as a sportsman, his opportunities for shooting not having

been great; but he dearly loved the hills and fresh air, and the few grouse which were — or were not — on Lady Eustace's mountains would go as far with him as they would with any man. Before he had consented to come with Frank, he had specially inquired whether there was a game-keeper, and it was not till he had been assured that there was no officer attached to the estate worthy of such a name, that he had consented to come upon his present expedition. "I don't clearly know what a gillie is," he said in answer to one of Frank's explanations. "If a gillie means a lad without any breeches on, I don't mind; but I could n't stand a severe man got up in well-made velveteens, who would see through my ignorance in a moment, and make known by comment the fact that he had done so." Greystock had promised that there should be no severity, and Herriot had come. Greystock brought with him two guns, two fishing-rods, a man-servant, and a huge hamper from Fortnum and Mason's. Arthur Herriot, whom the attorneys had not yet loved, brought some very thick boots, a pair of knickerbockers, together with Stone and Toddy's "Digest of the Common Law." The best of the legal profession consists in this — that when you get fairly at work you may give over working. An aspirant must learn everything; but a man may make his fortune at it, and know almost nothing. He may examine a witness with judgment, see through a case with precision, address a jury with eloquence, and yet be altogether ignorant of law. But he must be believed to be a very pundit before he will get a chance of exercising his judgment, his precision, or his eloquence. The men whose names are always in the newspapers never look at their Stone and Toddy —

care for it not at all — have their Stone and Toddy got up for them by their juniors when cases require that reference shall be made to precedents. But till that blessed time has come, a barrister who means success should carry his Stone and Toddy with him everywhere. Greystock never thought of the law now, unless he had some special case in hand; but Herriot could not afford to go out on a holiday without two volumes of Stone and Toddy's Digest in his portmanteau.

"You won't mind being left alone for the first morning?" said Frank, as soon as they had finished the contents of one of the pots from Fortnum and Mason.

"Not in the least. Stone and Toddy will carry me through."

"I 'd go on the mountain if I were you, and get into a habit of steady loading."

"Perhaps I will take a turn — just to find out how I feel in the knickerbockers. At what time shall I dine if you don't come back?"

"I shall certainly be here to dinner," said Frank, "unless the pony fails me or I get lost on the mountain." Then he started, and Herriot at once went to work on Stone and Toddy, with a pipe in his mouth. He had travelled all night, and it is hardly necessary to say that in five minutes he was fast asleep.

So also had Frank travelled all night, but the pony and the fresh air kept him awake. The boy had offered to go with him, but that he had altogether refused; and, therefore, to his other cares was that of finding his way. The sweep of the valleys, however, is long and not abrupt, and he could hardly miss his road if he would only make one judicious turn through a gap

in a certain wall which lay half way between the cottage and the castle. He was thinking of the work in hand, and he found the gap without difficulty. When through that he ascended the hill for two miles, and then the sea was before him, and Portray Castle, lying, as it seemed to him at that distance, close upon the sea-shore. "Upon my word, Lizzie has not done badly with herself," he said almost aloud, as he looked down upon the fair sight beneath him, and round upon the mountains, and remembered that, for her life at least, it was all hers, and after her death would belong to her son. What more does any human being desire of such a property than that?

He rode down to the great doorway — the mountain track, which fell on to the road about half a mile from the castle, having been plain enough, and there he gave up the pony into the hands of no less a man than Mr. Gowran himself. Gowran had watched the pony coming down the mountain side, and had desired to see of what like was "her leddyship's" cousin. In telling the whole truth of Mr. Gowran it must be acknowledged that he thought that his late master had made a very great mistake in the matter of his marriage. He could not imagine bad things enough of Lady Eustace, and almost believed that she was not now, and had n't been before her marriage, any better than she should be. The name of Admiral Greystock, as having been the father of his mistress, had indeed reached his ears, but Andy Gowran was a suspicious man and felt no confidence even in an admiral — in regard to whom he heard nothing of his having, or having had, a wife.

"It 's my fer-rm opeenion she 's jist naebody — and waur," he had said more than once to his own wife,

nodding his head with great emphasis at the last word. He was very anxious, therefore, to see "her leddyship's" cousin. Mr. Gowran thought that he knew a gentleman when he saw one. He thought, also, that he knew a lady, and that he did n't see one when he was engaged with his mistress. Cousin, indeed! "For the matter o' that, ony man that comes the way may be ca'ed a coosin." So Mr. Gowran was on the grand sweep before the garden gate and took the pony from Frank's hand.

"Is Lady Eustace at home?" Frank asked. Mr. Gowran perceived that Frank was a gentleman, and was disappointed. And Frank did n't come as a man comes who calls himself by a false name, and pretends to be an honest cousin, when in fact he is something — oh, ever so wicked! Mr. Gowran, who was a stern moralist, was certainly disappointed at Frank's appearance.

Lizzie was in a little sitting-room, reached by a long passage with steps in the middle, at some corner of the castle which seemed a long way from the great door. It was a cheerful little room, with chintz curtains, and a few shelves laden with brightly-bound books, which had been prepared for Lizzie immediately on her marriage. It looked out upon the sea, and she had almost taught herself to think that here she had sat with her adored Florian gazing in mutual ecstasy upon the "wide expanse of glittering waves." She was lying back in a low arm-chair as her cousin entered, and she did not rise to receive him. Of course she was alone, Miss Macnulty having received a suggestion that it would be well that she should do a little gardening in the moat. "Well, Frank," she said, with her sweetest smile, as she gave him her hand. She felt and under-

stood the extreme intimacy which would be implied by her not rising to receive him. As she could not rush into his arms, there was no device by which she could more clearly show to him how close she regarded his friendship.

"So I am at Portray Castle at last," he said, still holding her hand.

"Yes — at the dullest, dreariest, deadliest spot in all Christendom, I think —— if Ayrshire be Christendom. But never mind about that now. Perhaps, as you are at the other side of the mountain at the cottage, we shall find it less dull here at the castle."

"I thought you were to be so happy here!"

"Sit down and we 'll talk it all over by degrees. What will you have — breakfast or lunch?"

"Neither, thank you."

"Of course you 'll stay to dinner?"

"No, indeed. I 've a man there at the cottage with me who would cut his throat in his solitude."

"Let him cut his throat; but never mind now. As for being happy, women are never happy without men. I need n't tell any lies to you, you know. What makes me sure that this fuss about making men and women all the same must be wrong is just the fact that men can get along without women, and women can't without men. My life has been a burden to me. But never mind. Tell me about my lord — my lord and master."

"Lord Fawn!"

"Who else? What other lord and master? My bosom's own; my heart's best hope; my spot of terra firma; my cool running brook of fresh water; my rock; my love; my lord; my all. Is he always thinking of his absent Lizzie? Does he still toil at Downing street?

Oh, dear; do you remember, Frank, when he told us that 'one of us must remain in town'?"

"I have seen him."

"So you wrote me word."

"And I have seen a very obstinate, pig-headed, but nevertheless honest and truth-speaking gentleman."

"Frank, I don't care twopence for his honesty and truth. If he ill-treats me ——." Then she paused; looking into his face, she had seen at once by the manner in which he had taken her badinage, without a smile, that it was necessary that she should be serious as to her matrimonial prospects. "I suppose I had better let you tell your story," she said, "and I will sit still and listen."

"He means to ill-treat you."

"And you will let him?"

"You had better listen, as you promised, Lizzie. He declares that the marriage must be off at once unless you will send those diamonds to Mr. Camperdown or to the jewellers."

"And by what law or rule does he justify himself in a decision so monstrous? Is he prepared to prove that the property is not my own?"

"If you ask me my opinion as a lawyer, I doubt whether any such proof can be shown. But as a man and a friend I do advise you to give them up."

"Never."

"You must, of course, judge for yourself, but that is my advice. You had better, however, hear my whole story."

"Certainly," said Lizzie. Her whole manner was now changed. She had extricated herself from the crouching position in which her feet, her curl, her arms,

her whole body had been so arranged as to combine the charm of her beauty with the charm of proffered intimacy. Her dress was such as a woman would wear to receive her brother, and yet it had been studied. She had no gems about her but what she might well wear in her ordinary life, and yet the very rings on her fingers had not been put on without reference to her cousin Frank. Her position had been one of lounging ease, such as a woman might adopt when all alone, giving herself all the luxuries of solitude; but she had adopted it in special reference to cousin Frank. Now she was in earnest, with business before her; and though it may be said of her that she could never forget her appearance in presence of a man whom she desired to please, her curl and rings, and attitude were for the moment in the background. She had seated herself on a common chair, with her hands upon the table, and was looking into Frank's face with eager, eloquent, and combative eyes. She would take his law, because she believed in it; but, as far as she could see as yet, she would not take his advice unless it were backed by his law.

"Mr. Camperdown," continued Greystock, "has consented to prepare a case for opinion, though he will not agree that the Eustace estate shall be bound by that opinion."

"Then what 's the good of it?"

"We shall at least know, all of us, what is the opinion of some lawyer qualified to understand the circumstances of the case."

"Why is n't your opinion as good as that of any lawyer?"

"I could n't give an opinion; not otherwise than as

a private friend to you, which is worth nothing unless for your private guidance. Mr. Camperdown ——"

"I don't care one straw for Mr. Camperdown."

"Just let me finish."

"Oh, certainly; and you must n't be angry with me, Frank. The matter is so much to me; is n't it?"

"I won't be angry. Do I look as if I were angry? Mr. Camperdown is right."

"I dare say he may be what you call right. But I don't care about Mr. Camperdown a bit."

"He has no power, nor has John Eustace any power to decide that the property which may belong to a third person shall be jeopardised by any arbitration. The third person could not be made to lose his legal right by any such arbitration, and his claim, if made, would still have to be tried."

"Who is the third person, Frank?"

"Your own child at present."

"And will not he have it any way?"

"Camperdown and John Eustace say that it belongs to him at present. It is a point that, no doubt, should be settled."

"To whom do you say that it belongs?"

"That is a question I am not prepared to answer."

"To whom do you think that it belongs?"

"I have refused to look at a single paper on the subject, and my opinion is worth nothing. From what I have heard in conversation with Mr. Camperdown and John Eustace, I cannot find that they make their case good."

"Nor can I," said Lizzie.

"A case is to be prepared for Mr. Dove."

"Who is Mr. Dove?"

"Mr. Dove is a barrister, and no doubt a very clever fellow. If his opinion be such as Mr. Camperdown expects, he will at once proceed against you at law for the immediate recovery of the necklace."

"I shall be ready for him," said Lizzie, and as she spoke all her little feminine softnesses were for the moment laid aside.

"If Mr. Dove's opinion be in your favour ——"

"Well," said Lizzie, "what then?"

"In that case Mr. Camperdown, acting on behalf of John Eustace and young Florian ——"

"How dreadful it is to hear of my bitterest enemy acting on behalf of my own child!" said Lizzie, holding up her hands piteously. "Well?"

"In that case Mr. Camperdown will serve you with some notice that the jewels are not yours, to part with them as you may please."

"But they will be mine."

"He says not; but in such case he will content himself with taking steps which may prevent you from selling them."

"Who says that I want to sell them?" demanded Lizzie indignantly.

"Or from giving them away, say to a second husband."

"How little they know me!"

"Now I have told you all about Mr. Camperdown."

"Yes."

"And the next thing is to tell you about Lord Fawn."

"That is everything. I care nothing for Mr. Camperdown; nor yet for Mr. Dove — if that is his absurd name. Lord Fawn is of more moment to me, though, indeed, he has given me but little cause to say so."

"In the first place, I must explain to you that Lord Fawn is very unhappy."

"He may thank himself for it."

"He is pulled this way and that, and is half distraught; but he has stated with as much positive assurance as such a man can assume, that the match must be regarded as broken off unless you will at once restore the necklace."

"He does?"

"He has commissioned me to give you that message; and it is my duty, Lizzie, as your friend, to tell you my conviction that he repents his engagement."

She now rose from her chair and began to walk about the room. "He shall not go back from it. He shall learn that I am not a creature at his own disposal in that way. He shall find that I have some strength if you have none."

"What would you have had me do?"

"Taken him by the throat," said Lizzie.

"Taking by the throat in these days seldom forwards any object, unless the taken one be known to the police. I think Lord Fawn is behaving very badly, and I have told him so. No doubt he is under the influence of others — mother and sisters — who are not friendly to you."

"False-faced idiots!" said Lizzie.

"He himself is somewhat afraid of me — is much afraid of you — is afraid of what people will say of him; and, to give him his due, is afraid also of doing what is wrong. He is timid, weak, conscientious, and wretched. If you have set your heart upon marrying him ——"

"My heart!" said Lizzie scornfully.

"Or your mind, you can have him by simply sending the diamonds to the jewellers. Whatever may be his wishes, in that case he will redeem his word."

"Not for him or all that belongs to him! It would n't be much. He 's just a pauper with a name."

"Then your loss will be so much the less."

"But what right has he to treat me so? Did you ever before hear of such a thing? Why is he to be allowed to go back, without punishment, more than another?"

"What punishment would you wish?"

"That he should be beaten within an inch of his life; and if the inch were not there, I should not complain."

"And I am to do it, to my absolute ruin and to your great injury?"

"I think I could almost do it myself." And Lizzie raised her hand as though there were some weapon in it. "But, Frank, there must be something. You would n't have me sit down and bear it. All the world has been told of the engagement. There must be some punishment."

"You would not wish to have an action brought for breach of promise?"

"I would wish to do whatever would hurt him most without hurting myself," said Lizzie.

"You won't give up the necklace?" said Frank.

"Certainly not," said Lizzie. "Give it up for his sake — a man that I have always despised!"

"Then you had better let him go."

"I will not let him go. What, to be pointed at as the woman that Lord Fawn had jilted? Never! My necklace should be nothing more to him than this ring."

And she drew from her finger a little circlet of gold with a stone, for which she had owed Messrs. Harter and Benjamin five-and-thirty pounds till Sir Florian had settled that account for her. "What cause can he give for such treatment?"

"He acknowledges that there is no cause which he can state openly."

"And I am to bear it? And it is you that tell me so? Oh, Frank!"

"Let us understand each other, Lizzie. I will not fight him, that is, with pistols; nor will I attempt to thrash him. It would be useless to argue whether public opinion is right or wrong; but public opinion is now so much opposed to that kind of thing that it is out of the question. I should injure your position and destroy my own. If you mean to quarrel with me on that score, you had better say so."

Perhaps at that moment he almost wished that she would quarrel with him, but she was otherwise disposed. "Oh, Frank," she said, "do not desert me."

"I will not desert you."

"You feel that I am ill-used, Frank."

"I do. I think that his conduct is inexcusable."

"And there is to be no punishment?" she asked with that strong indignation at injustice which the unjust always feel when they are injured.

"If you carry yourself well, quietly and with dignity, the world will punish him."

"I don't believe a bit of it. I am not a Patient Grizel who can content myself with heaping benefits on those who injure me, and then thinking that they are coals of fire. Lucy Morris is one of that sort." Frank ought to have resented the attack, but he

did not. "I have no such tame virtues. I'll tell him to his face what he is. I'll lead him such a life that he shall be sick of the very name of a necklace."

"You cannot ask him to marry you."

"I will. What, not ask a man to keep his promise when you are engaged to him? I am not going to be such a girl as that."

"Do you love him, then?"

"Love him! I hate him. I always despised him, and now I hate him."

"And yet you would marry him?"

"Not for worlds, Frank. No. Because you advised me I thought that I would do so. Yes, you did, Frank. But for you I would never have dreamed of taking him. You know, Frank, how it was, when you told me of him and would n't come to me yourself." Now again she was sitting close to him and had her hand upon his arm. "No, Frank; even to please you I could not marry him now. But I'll tell you what I'll do. He shall ask me again. In spite of those idiots at Richmond he shall kneel at my feet, necklace or no necklace; and then — then I'll tell him what I think of him. Marry him! I would not touch him with a pair of tongs." As she said this she was holding her cousin fast by the hand.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SHOWING WHAT FRANK GREYSTOCK THOUGHT ABOUT MARRIAGE.

It had not been much after noon when Frank Greystock reached Portray Castle, and it was very nearly five when he left it. Of course he had lunched with the two ladies, and as the conversation before lunch had been long and interesting, they did not sit down till near three. Then Lizzie had taken him out to show him the grounds and garden, and they had clambered together down to the sea-beach. "Leave me here," she had said when he insisted on going because of his friend at the cottage. When he suggested that she would want help to climb back up the rocks to the castle, she shook her head as though her heart was too full to admit of a consideration so trifling. "My thoughts flow more freely here with the surge of the water in my ears than they will with that old woman droning to me. I come here often, and know every rock and every stone." That was not exactly true, as she had never been down but once before. "You mean to come again." He told her that of course he should come again. "I will name neither day nor hour. I have nothing to take me away. If I am not at the castle, I shall be at this spot. Good-by, Frank." He took her in his arms and kissed her, of course as a

brother; and then he clambered up, got on his pony, and rode away.

"I dinna ken just what to mak' o' him," said Gowran to his wife. "May be he is her coosin; but coosins are nae that sib that a weeder is to be hailed aboot jist ane as though she were ony quean at a fair." From which it may be inferred that Mr. Gowran had watched the pair as they were descending together toward the shore.

Frank had so much to think of, riding back to the cottage, that when he came to the gap, instead of turning round along the wall down the valley, he took the track right on across the mountain and lost his way. He had meant to be back at the cottage by three or four, and yet had made his visit to the castle so long that without any losing of his way he could not have been there before seven. As it was, when that hour arrived, he was up on the top of a hill and could again see Portray Castle clustering down close upon the sea, and the thin belt of trees and the shining water beyond; but of the road to the cottage he knew nothing. For a moment he thought of returning to Portray, till he had taught himself to perceive that the distance was much greater than it had been from the spot at which he had first seen the castle in the morning; and then he turned his pony round and descended on the other side.

His mind was very full of Lizzie Eustace, and full also of Lucy Morris. If it were to be asserted here that a young man may be perfectly true to a first young woman while he is falling in love with a second, the readers of this story would probably be offended. But undoubtedly many men believe them-

selves to be quite true while undergoing this process, and many young women expect nothing else from their lovers. If only he will come right at last, they are contented. And if he don't come right at all, it is the way of the world, and the game has to be played over again. Lucy Morris, no doubt, had lived a life too retired for the learning of such useful forbearance, but Frank Greystock was quite a proficient. He still considered himself to be true to Lucy Morris, with a truth seldom found in this degenerate age — with a truth to which he intended to sacrifice some of the brightest hopes of his life — with a truth which, after much thought, he had generously preferred to his ambition. Perhaps there was found some shade of regret to tinge the merit which he assumed on this head, in respect of the bright things which it would be necessary that he should abandon; but if so, the feeling only assisted him in defending his present conduct from any aspersions his conscience might bring against it. He intended to marry Lucy Morris, without a shilling, without position, a girl who had earned her bread as a governess, simply because he loved her. It was a wonder to himself that he, a lawyer, a man of the world, a member of Parliament, one who had been steeped up to his shoulders in the ways of the world, should still be so pure as to be capable of such a sacrifice. But it was so; and the sacrifice would undoubtedly be made some day. It would be absurd in one conscious of such high merit to be afraid of the ordinary social incidents of life. It is the debauched broken drunkard who should become a teetotaller, and not the healthy, hard-working father of a family who never drinks a drop of

wine till dinner-time. He need not be afraid of a glass of champagne when, on a chance occasion, he goes to a picnic. Frank Greystock was now going to his picnic; and, though he meant to be true to Lucy Morris, he had enjoyed his glass of champagne with Lizzie Eustace under the rocks. He was thinking a good deal of his champagne when he lost his way.

What a wonderful woman was his cousin Lizzie, and so unlike any other girl he had ever seen! How full she was of energy, how courageous, and, then, how beautiful! No doubt her special treatment of him was sheer flattery. He told himself that it was so. But, after all, flattery is agreeable. That she did like him better than anybody else was probable. He could have no feeling of the injustice he might do to the heart of a woman who at the very moment that she was expressing her partiality for him was also expressing her anger that another man would not consent to marry her. And then women who have had one husband already are not like young girls in respect to their hearts. So at least thought Frank Greystock. Then he remembered the time at which he had intended to ask Lizzie to be his wife — the very day on which he would have done so had he been able to get away from that early division at the House — and he asked himself whether he felt any regret on that score. It would have been very nice to come down to Portray Castle as to his own mansion after the work of the courts and of the session. Had Lizzie become his wife, her fortune would have helped him to the very highest steps beneath the throne. At present he was almost nobody — because he was so poor, and in debt.

It was so, undoubtedly; but what did all that matter in comparison with the love of Lucy Morris? A man is bound to be true. And he would be true. Only, as a matter of course, Lucy must wait.

When he had first kissed his cousin up in London, she suggested that the kiss was given as by a brother, and asserted that it was accepted as by a sister. He had not demurred, having been allowed the kiss. Nothing of the kind had been said under the rocks to-day; but then that fraternal arrangement, when once made and accepted, remains, no doubt, in force for a long time. He did like his cousin Lizzie. He liked to feel that he could be her friend, with the power of domineering over her. She, also, was fond of her own way, and loved to domineer herself; but the moment that he suggested to her that there might be a quarrel, she was reduced to a prayer that he would not desert her. Such a friendship has charms for a young man, especially if the lady be pretty. As to Lizzie's prettiness, no man or woman could entertain a doubt. And she had a way of making the most of herself, which it was very hard to resist. Some young women, when they clamber over rocks, are awkward, heavy, unattractive, and troublesome. But Lizzie had at one moment touched him as a fairy might have done; had sprung at another from stone to stone, requiring no help; and then, on a sudden, had become so powerless that he had been forced almost to carry her in his arms. That, probably, must have been the moment which induced Mr. Gowran to liken her to a quean at a fair.

But, undoubtedly, there might be trouble. Frank was sufficiently experienced in the ways of the world

to know that trouble would sometimes come from young ladies who treat young men like their brothers, when those young men are engaged to other young ladies. The other young ladies are apt to disapprove of brothers who are not brothers by absolute right of birth. He knew also that all the circumstances of his cousin's position would make it expedient that she should marry a second husband. As he could not be that second husband — that matter was settled, whether for good or bad — was he not creating trouble, both for her and for himself? Then there arose in his mind a feeling, very strange, but by no means uncommon, that prudence on his part would be mean, because by such prudence he would be securing safety for himself as well as for her. What he was doing was not only imprudent, but wrong also. He knew that it was so. But Lizzie Eustace was a pretty young woman; and when a pretty young woman is in the case, a man is bound to think neither of what is prudent nor of what is right. Such was — perhaps his instinct rather than his theory. For her sake, if not for his own, he should have abstained. She was his cousin, and was so placed in the world as specially to require some strong hand to help her. He knew her to be, in truth, heartless, false, and greedy; but she had so lived that even yet her future life might be successful. He had called himself her friend as well as cousin, and was bound to protect her from evil, if protection were possible. But he was adding to all her difficulties, because she pretended to be in love with him. He knew that it was pretence; and yet, because she was pretty, and because he was a man, he could not save her from herself. "It does n't do to be wiser

than other men," he said to himself as he looked round about on the bare hill-side. In the mean time he had altogether lost his way.

It was between nine and ten when he reached the cottage. "Of course you have dined?" said Herriot.

"Not a bit of it. I left before five, being sure that I could get here in an hour and a half. I have been riding up and down these dreary hills for nearly five hours. You have dined?"

"There was a neck of mutton and a chicken. She said the neck of mutton would keep hot best, so I took the chicken. I hope you like lukewarm neck of mutton?"

"I am hungry enough to eat anything; not but what I had a first-rate luncheon. What have you done all day?"

"Stone and Toddy," said Herriot.

"Stick to that. If anything can pull you through, Stone and Toddy will. I lived upon them for two years."

"Stone and Toddy, with a little tobacco, have been all my comfort. I began, however, by sleeping for a few hours. Then I went upon the mountains."

"Did you take a gun?"

"I took it out of the case, but it did n't come right, and so I left it. A man came to me and said that he was the keeper."

"He 'd have put the gun right for you."

"I was too bashful for that. I persuaded him that I wanted to go out alone and see what birds there were, and at last I induced him to stay here with the old woman. He 's to be at the cottage at nine to-morrow. I hope that is all right."

In the evening, as they smoked and drank whiskey

and water — probably supposing that to be correct in Ayrshire — they were led on by the combined warmth of the spirit, the tobacco, and their friendship, to talk about women. Frank, some month or six weeks since, in a moment of soft confidence, had told his friend of his engagement with Lucy Morris. Of Lizzie Eustace he had spoken only as of a cousin whose interests were dear to him. Her engagement with Lord Fawn was known to all London, and was, therefore, known to Arthur Herriot. Some distant rumour, however, had reached him that the course of true love was not running quite smooth, and therefore on that subject he would not speak, at any rate till Greystock should first mention it. "How odd it is to find two women living all alone in a great house like that," Frank had said.

"Because so few women have the means to live in large houses, unless they live with fathers or husbands."

"The truth is," said Frank, "that women don't do well alone. There is always a savour of misfortune — or, at least, of melancholy — about a household which has no man to look after it. With us, generally, old maids don't keep houses, and widows marry again. No doubt it was an unconscious appreciation of this feeling which brought about the burning of Indian widows. There is an unfitness in women for solitude. A female Prometheus, even without a vulture, would indicate cruelty worse even than Jove's. A woman should marry — once, twice, and thrice if necessary."

"Women can't marry without men to marry them."

Frank Greystock filled his pipe as he went on with his lecture. "That idea as to the greater number of women is all nonsense. Of course we are speaking of our own kind of men and women, and the dispropor-

tion of the numbers in so small a division of the population amounts to nothing. We have no statistics to tell us whether there be any such disproportion in classes where men do not die early from overwork."

"More females are born than males."

"That 's more than I know. As one of the legislators of the country I am prepared to state that statistics are always false. What we have to do is to induce men to marry. We can't do it by statute."

"No, thank God."

"Nor yet by fashion."

"Fashion seems to be going the other way," said Herriot.

"It can be only done by education and conscience. Take men of forty all round — men of our own class — you believe that the married men are happier than the unmarried? I want an answer, you know, just for the sake of the argument."

"I think the married men are the happier. But you speak as the fox who had lost his tail; or, at any rate, as a fox in the act of losing it."

"Never mind my tail. If morality in life and enlarged affections are conducive to happiness, it must be so."

"Short commons and unpaid bills are conducive to misery. That 's what I should say if I wanted to oppose you."

"I never came across a man willing to speak the truth who did not admit that, in the long run, married men are the happier. As regards women, there is n't even ground for an argument. And yet men don't marry."

"They can't."

"You mean there is n't food enough in the world."

"The man fears that he won't get enough of what there is for his wife and family."

"The labourer with twelve shillings a week has no such fear. And if he did marry, the food would come. It is n't that. The man is unconscientious and ignorant as to the sources of true happiness, and won't submit himself to cold mutton and three clean shirts a week — not because he dislikes mutton and dirty linen himself, but because the world says they are vulgar. That 's the feeling that keeps you from marrying, Herriot."

"As for me," said Herriot, "I regard myself as so placed that I do not dare to think of a young woman of my own rank except as a creature that must be foreign to me. I cannot make such a one my friend as I would a man, because I should be in love with her at once. And I do not dare to be in love because I would not see a wife and children starve. I regard my position as one of enforced monasticism, and myself as a monk under the cruellest compulsion. I often wish that I had been brought up as a journeyman hatter."

"Why a hatter?"

"I 'm told it 's an active sort of life. You 're fast asleep, and I was just now, when you were preaching. We 'd better go to bed. Nine o'clock for breakfast, I suppose?"

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. DOVE'S OPINION.

Mr. Thomas Dove, familiarly known among clubmen, attorneys' clerks, and, perhaps, even among judges when very far from their seats of judgment, as Turtle Dove, was a counsel learned in the law. He was a counsel so learned in the law, that there was no question within the limits of an attorney's capability of putting to him that he could not answer with the aid of his books. And when he had once given an opinion, all Westminster could not move him from it — nor could Chancery Lane and Lincoln's Inn and the Temple added to Westminster. When Mr. Dove had once been positive, no man on earth was more positive. It behooved him, therefore, to be right when he was positive; and though, whether wrong or right, he was equally stubborn, it must be acknowledged that he was seldom proved to be wrong. Consequently the attorneys believed in him, and he prospered. He was a thin man, over fifty years of age, very full of scorn and wrath, impatient of a fool, and thinking most men to be fools; afraid of nothing on earth — and, so his enemies said, of nothing elsewhere; eaten up by conceit; fond of law, but fonder, perhaps, of dominion; soft as milk to those who acknowledged his power, but a tyrant to all who contested it; conscientious, thoughtful, sarcastic, bright-witted, and laborious. He was a

man who never spared himself. If he had a case in hand, though the interest to himself in it was almost nothing, he would rob himself of rest for a week, should a point arise which required such labour. It was the theory of Mr. Dove's life that he would never be beaten. Perhaps it was some fear in this respect that had kept him from Parliament and confined him to the courts and the company of attorneys. He was, in truth, a married man with a family; but they who knew him as the terror of opponents and as the divulger of legal opinions heard nothing of his wife and children. He kept all such matters quite to himself, and was not given to much social intercourse with those among whom his work lay. Out at Streatham, where he lived, Mrs. Dove probably had her circle of acquaintance; but Mr. Dove's domestic life and his forensic life were kept quite separate.

At the present moment Mr. Dove is interesting to us solely as being the learned counsel in whom Mr. Camperdown trusted — to whom Mr. Camperdown was willing to trust for an opinion in so grave a matter as that of the Eustace diamonds. A case was made out and submitted to Mr. Dove immediately after that scene on the pavement in Mount street, at which Mr. Camperdown had endeavoured to induce Lizzie to give up the necklace; and the following is the opinion which Mr. Dove gave:

"There is much error about heirlooms. Many think that any chattel may be made an heirloom by any owner of it. This is not the case. The law, however, does recognise heirlooms; as to which the Exors. or Admors. are excluded in favour of the successor; and when there are such heirlooms they go to the heir by

special custom. Any devise of an heirloom is necessarily void, for the will takes place after death, and the heirloom is already vested in the heir by custom. We have it from Littleton that law prefers custom to devise.

"Brooke says that the best thing of every sort may be an heirloom — such as the best bed, the best table, the best pot or pan.

"Coke says that heirlooms are so by custom, and not by law.

"Spelman says, in defining an heirloom, that it may be 'Omne utensil robustius;' which would exclude a necklace.

"In the 'Termes de Ley,' it is defined as, 'Ascun parcel des utensils.'

"We are told in 'Coke upon Littleton' that crown jewels are heirlooms, which decision — as far as it goes — denies the right to other jewels.

"Certain chattels may undoubtedly be held and claimed as being in the nature of heirlooms — as swords, pennons of honour, garter and collar of S. S. See case of the Earl of Northumberland; and that of the Pusey horn — Pusey v. Pusey. The journals of the House of Lords, delivered officially to peers, may be so claimed. See Upton v. Lord Ferrers.

"A devisor may clearly devise or limit the possession of chattels, making them inalienable by devisees in succession. But in such cases they will become the absolute possession of the first person seized in tail, even though an infant, and in case of death without will would go to the Exors. Such arrangement, therefore, can only hold good for lives in existence and for 21 years afterwards. Chattels so secured would not be

heirlooms. See Carr v. Lord Erroll, 14 Vesey, and Rowland v. Morgan.

"Lord Eldon remarks that such chattels held in families are 'rather favourites of the court.' This was in the Ormonde case. Executors, therefore, even when setting aside any claim as for heirlooms, ought not to apply such property in payment of debts unless obliged.

"The law allows of claims for paraphernalia for widows, and, having adjusted such claims, seems to show that the claim may be limited.

"If a man deliver cloth to his wife, and die, she shall have it, though she had not fashioned it into the garment intended.

"Pearls and jewels, even though only worn on state occasions, may go to the widow as paraphernalia, but with a limit. In the case of Lady Douglas, she being the daughter of an Irish Earl and widow of the King's Sergeant (temp. Car. I.), it was held that £370 was not too much, and she was allowed a diamond and a pearl chain to that value.

"In 1674 Lord Keeper Finch declared that he would never allow paraphernalia, except to the widow of a nobleman.

"But in 1721 Lord Macclesfield gave Mistress Tipping paraphernalia to the value of £200 — whether so persuaded by law and precedent, or otherwise, may be uncertain.

"Lord Talbot allowed a gold watch as paraphernalia.

"Lord Hardwicke went much further, and decided that Mrs. Northey was entitled to wear jewels to the value of £3,000, saying that value made no difference; but seems to have limited the nature of her possession

in the jewels by declaring her to be entitled to wear them only when full-dressed.

"It is, I think, clear that the Eustace estate cannot claim the jewels as an heirloom. They are last mentioned, and, so far as I know, only mentioned as an heirloom in the will of the great-grandfather of the present baronet, if these be the diamonds then named by him. As such he could not have devised them to the present claimant, as he died in 1820, and the present claimant is not yet two years old.

"Whether the widow could claim them as paraphernalia is more doubtful. I do not know that Lord Hardwicke's ruling would decide the case; but if so, she would, I think, be debarred from selling, as he limits the use of jewels of lesser value than these to the wearing of them when full-dressed. The use being limited, possession with power of alienation cannot be intended.

"The lady's claim to them as a gift from her husband amounts to nothing. If they are not hers by will, and it seems that they are not so, she can only hold them as paraphernalia belonging to her station.

"I presume it to be capable of proof that the diamonds were not in Scotland when Sir Florian made his will or when he died. The former fact might be used as tending to show his intention when the will was made. I understand that he did leave to his widow by will all the chattels in Portray Castle. J. D.

"15 August, 18—."

When Mr. Camperdown had thrice read this opinion, he sat in his chair an unhappy old man. It was undoubtedly the case that he had been a lawyer for upward of forty years, and had always believed that any

gentleman could make any article of value an heirloom in his family. The title-deeds of vast estates had been confided to his keeping, and he had had much to do with property of every kind; and now he was told that in reference to property of a certain description — property which by its nature could only belong to such as they who were his clients — he had been long without any knowledge whatsoever. He had called this necklace an heirloom to John Eustace above a score of times; and now he was told by Mr. Dove not only that the necklace was not an heirloom, but that it could n't have been an heirloom. He was a man who trusted much in a barrister, as was natural with an attorney; but he was now almost inclined to doubt Mr. Dove. And he was hardly more at ease in regard to the other clauses of the opinion. Not only could not the estate claim the necklace as an heirloom, but that greedy siren, that heartless snake, that harpy of a widow — for it was thus that Mr. Camperdown in his solitude spoke to himself of poor Lizzie, perhaps throwing in a harder word or two — that female swindler could claim it as — paraphernalia!

There was a crumb of comfort for him in the thought that he could force her to claim that privilege from a decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, and that her greed would be exposed should she do so. And she could be prevented from selling the diamonds. Mr. Dove seemed to make that quite clear. But then there came that other question as to the inheritance of the property under the husband's will. That Sir Florian had not intended that she should inherit the necklace, Mr. Camperdown was quite certain. On that point he suffered no doubt. But would he be able to prove

that the diamonds had never been in Scotland since Sir Florian's marriage? He had traced their history from that date with all the diligence he could use, and he thought that he knew it. But it might be doubtful whether he could prove it. Lady Eustace had first stated — had so stated before she had learned the importance of any other statement — that Sir Florian had given her the diamonds in London as they passed through London from Scotland to Italy, and that she had carried them thence to Naples, where Sir Florian had died. If this were so, they could not have been at Portray Castle till she took them there as a widow, and they would undoubtedly be regarded as a portion of that property which Sir Florian habitually kept in London. That this was so Mr. Camperdown entertained no doubt. But now the widow alleged that Sir Florian had given the necklace to her in Scotland, whither they had gone immediately after their marriage, and that she herself had brought them up to London. They had been married on the 5th of September; and by the jewellers' books it was hard to tell whether the trinket had been given up to Sir Florian on the 4th or 24th of September. On the 24th Sir Florian and his young bride had undoubtedly been in London. Mr. Camperdown anathematised the carelessness of everybody connected with Messrs. Garnett's establishment. "Those sort of people have no more idea of accuracy than — than —;" than he had had of heirlooms, his conscience whispered to him, filling up the blank.

Nevertheless he thought he could prove that the necklace was first put into Lizzie's hands in London. The middle-aged and very discreet man at Messrs.

Garnett's, who had given up the jewel-case to Sir Florian, was sure that he had known Sir Florian to be a married man when he did so. The lady's maid who had been in Scotland with Lady Eustace, and who was now living in Turin, having married a courier, had given evidence before an Italian man of law, stating that she had never seen the necklace till she came to London. There were, moreover, the probabilities of the case. Was it likely that Sir Florian should take such a thing down in his pocket to Scotland? And there was the statement as first made by Lady Eustace herself to her cousin Frank, repeated by him to John Eustace, and not to be denied by any one. It was all very well for her now to say that she had forgotten; but would any one believe that on such a subject she could forget?

But still the whole thing was very uncomfortable. Mr. Dove's opinion, if seen by Lady Eustace and her friends, would rather fortify them than frighten them. Were she once to get hold of that word paraphernalia, it would be as a tower of strength to her. Mr. Camperdown specially felt this, that whereas he had hitherto believed that no respectable attorney would take up such a case as that of Lady Eustace, he could not now but confess to himself that any lawyer seeing Mr. Dove's opinion would be justified in taking it up. And yet he was as certain as ever that the woman was robbing the estate which it was his duty to guard, and that should he cease to be active in the matter the necklace would be broken up and the property sold and scattered before a year was out, and then the woman would have got the better of him! "She shall find that we have not done with her yet," he said to himself, as he wrote a line to John Eustace.

But John Eustace was out of town, as a matter of course; and on the next day Mr. Camperdown himself went down and joined his wife and family at a little cottage which he had at Dawlish. The necklace, however, interfered much with his holiday.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. GOWRAN IS VERY FUNNY.

Frank Greystock certainly went over to Portray too often — so often that the pony was proved to be quite necessary. Miss Macnulty held her tongue and was gloomy, believing that Lady Eustace was still engaged to Lord Fawn, and feeling that in that case there should not be so many visits to the rocks. Mr. Gowran was very attentive, and could tell on any day, to five minutes, how long the two cousins were sitting together on the seashore. Arthur Herriot, who cared nothing for Lady Eustace, but who knew that his friend had promised to marry Lucy Morris, was inclined to be serious on the subject; but — as is always the case with men — was not willing to speak about it.

Once, and once only, the two men dined together at the castle, for the doing of which it was necessary that a gig should be hired all the way from Prestwick. Herriot had not been anxious to go over, alleging various excuses — the absence of dress clothes, the calls of Stone and Toddy, his bashfulness, and the absurdity of paying fifteen shillings for a gig. But he went at last, constrained by his friend, and a very dull evening he passed. Lizzie was quite unlike her usual self, was silent, grave, and solemnly courteous; Miss Macnulty had not a word to say for herself; and even Frank was

dull. Arthur Herriot had not tried to exert himself, and the dinner had been a failure.

"You don't think much of my cousin, I dare say," said Frank, as they were driving back.

"She is a very pretty woman."

"And I should say that she does not think much of you."

"Probably not."

"Why on earth would n't you speak to her? I went on making speeches to Miss Macnulty on purpose to give you a chance. Lizzie generally talks about as well as any young woman I know; but you had not a word to say to her, nor she to you."

"Because you devoted yourself to Miss Mac —— whatever her name is."

"That 's nonsense," said Frank; "Lizzie and I are more like brother and sister than anything else. She has no one else belonging to her, and she has to come to me for advice, and all that sort of thing. I wanted you to like her."

"I never like people and people never like me. There is an old saying that you should know a man seven years before you poke his fire. I want to know persons seven years before I can ask them how they do. To take me out to dine in this way was of all things the most hopeless."

"But you do dine out in London."

"That 's different. There 's a certain routine of conversation going, and one falls into it. At such affairs as that this evening one has to be intimate or it is a bore. I don't mean to say anything against Lady Eustace. Her beauty is undeniable, and I don't doubt her cleverness."

"She is sometimes too clever," said Frank.

"I hope she is not becoming too clever for you. You 've got to remember that you 're due elsewhere; eh, old fellow?" This was the first word that Herriot had said on the subject, and to that word Frank Greystock made no answer. But it had its effect, as also did the gloomy looks of Miss Macnulty, and the not unobserved presence of Mr. Andy Gowran on various occasions.

Between them they shot more grouse — so the keeper swore — than had ever been shot on these mountains before. Herriot absolutely killed one or two himself, to his own great delight, and Frank, who was fairly skilful, would get four or five in a day. There were excursions to be made, and the air of the hills was in itself a treat to both of them. Though Greystock was so often away at the castle, Herriot did not find the time hang heavily on his hands, and was sorry when his fortnight was over. "I think I shall stay a couple of days longer," Frank said, when Herriot spoke of their return. "The truth is, I must see Lizzie again. She is bothered by business, and I have to see her about a letter that came this morning. You need n't pull such a long face. There 's nothing of the kind you 're thinking of."

"I thought so much of what you once said to me about another girl that I hope she at any rate may never be in trouble."

"I hope she never may, on my account," said Frank. "And what troubles she may have, as life will be troublesome, I trust that I may share and lessen."

On that evening Herriot went, and on the next morning Frank Greystock again rode over to Portray

Castle; but when he was alone after Herriot's departure he wrote a letter to Lucy Morris. He had expressed a hope that he might never be a cause of trouble to Lucy Morris, and he knew that his silence would trouble her. There could be no human being less inclined to be suspicious than Lucy Morris. Of that Frank was sure. But there had been an express stipulation with Lady Fawn that she should be allowed to receive letters from him, and she would naturally be vexed when he did not write to her. So he wrote.

"PORTRAY COTTAGE, September 3, 18—.

"DEAREST LUCY: We have been here for a fortnight, shooting grouse, wandering about the mountains, and going to sleep on the hillsides. You will say that there never was a time so fit for the writing of letters, but that will be because you have not learned yet that the idler people are the more inclined they are to be idle. We hear of lord chancellors writing letters to their mothers every day of their lives; but men who have nothing on earth to do cannot bring themselves to face a sheet of paper. I would promise that when I am lord chancellor I would write to you every day were it not that when that time comes I shall hope to be always with you.

"And, in truth, I have had to pay constant visits to my cousin, who lives in a big castle on the seaside, ten miles from here, over the mountains, and who is in a peck of troubles; in spite of her prosperity one of the unhappiest women, I should say, that you could meet anywhere. You know so much of her affairs that without breach of trust I may say so much. I wish she had a father or a brother to manage her matters for

her; but she has none, and I cannot desert her. Your Lord Fawn is behaving badly to her; and so, as far as I can see, are the people who manage the Eustace property. Lizzie, as you know, is not the most tractable of women, and altogether I have more to do in the matter than I like. Riding ten times backwards and forwards so often over the same route on a little pony is not good fun, but I am almost glad the distance is not less. Otherwise I might have been always there. I know you don't quite like Lizzie, but she is to be pitied.

"I go up to London on Friday, but shall only be there for one or two days, that is, for one night. I go almost entirely on her business, and must, I fear, be here again, or at the castle, before I can settle myself either for work or happiness. On Sunday night I go down to Bobsborough, where, indeed, I ought to have been earlier. I fear I cannot go to Richmond on the Saturday, and on the Sunday Lady Fawn would hardly make me welcome. I shall be at Bobsborough for about three weeks, and there, if you have commands to give, I will obey them.

"I may, however, tell you the truth at once — though it is a truth you must keep very much to yourself. In the position in which I now stand as to Lord Fawn — being absolutely forced to quarrel with him on Lizzie's behalf — Lady Fawn could hardly receive me with comfort to herself. She is the best of women; and, as she is your dear friend, nothing is further from me than any idea of quarrelling with her; but of course she takes her son's part, and I hardly know how all allusion to the subject could be avoided.

"This, however, dearest, need ruffle no feather be-

tween you and me, who love each other better than we love either the Fawns or the Lizzies. Let me find a line at my chambers to say that it is so and always shall be so.

"God bless my own darling.

"Ever and always your own,

"F. G."

On the following day he rode over to the castle. He had received a letter from John Eustace, who had found himself forced to run up to London to meet Mr. Camperdown. The lawyer had thought to postpone further consideration of the whole matter till he and everybody else would be naturally in London — till November that might be, or perhaps even till after Christmas. But his mind was ill at ease; and he knew that so much might be done with the diamonds in four months! They might even now be in the hands of some Benjamin or of some Harter, and it might soon be beyond the power either of lawyers or of policemen to trace them. He therefore went up from Dawlish and persuaded John Eustace to come from Yorkshire. It was a great nuisance, and Eustace freely anathematised the necklace. "If only some one would steal it, so that we might hear no more of the thing," he said. But, as Mr. Camperdown had frequently remarked, the value was too great for trifling, and Eustace went up to London. Mr. Camperdown put into his hands the Turtle Dove's opinion, explaining that it was by no means expedient that it should be shown to the other party. Eustace thought that the opinion should be common to them all. "We pay for it," said Mr. Camperdown, "and they can get their opinion from

any other barrister if they please." But what was to be done? Eustace declared that as to the present whereabouts of the necklace he did not in the least doubt that he could get the truth from Frank Greystock. He therefore wrote to Greystock, and with that letter in his pocket Frank rode over to the castle for the last time.

He, too, was heartily sick of the necklace; but unfortunately he was not equally sick of her who held it in possession. And he was, too, better alive to the importance of the value of the trinket than John Eustace, though not so keenly as was Mr. Camperdown. Lady Eustace was out somewhere among the cliffs, the servant said. He regretted this as he followed her, but he was obliged to follow her. Half-way down to the seashore, much below the knob on which she had attempted to sit with her Shelley, but yet not below the need of assistance, he found her seated in a little ravine. "I knew you would come," she said. Of course she had known that he would come. She did not rise, or even give him her hand, but there was a spot close beside her on which it was to be presumed that he would seat himself. She had a volume of Byron in her hand — the "Corsair," "Lara," and the "Giaour" — a kind of poetry which was in truth more intelligible to her than "Queen Mab." "You go to-morrow?"

"Yes; I go to-morrow."

"And Lubin has gone?" Arthur Herriot was Lubin.

"Lubin has gone. Though why Lubin I cannot guess. The normal Lubin to me is a stupid fellow always in love. Herriot is not stupid and is never in love."

"Nevertheless, he is Lubin if I choose to call him so. Why did he twiddle his thumbs instead of talking. Have you heard anything of Lord Fawn?"

"I have had a letter from your brother-in-law."

"And what is John the Just pleased to say?"

"John the Just, which is a better name for the man than the other, has been called up to London, much against his will, by Mr. Camperdown."

"Who is Samuel the Unjust." Mr. Camperdown's name was Samuel.

"And now wants to know where this terrible necklace is at this present moment." He paused a moment, but Lizzie did not answer him. "I suppose you have no objection to telling me where it is."

"None in the least, or to giving it you to keep for me, only that I would not so far trouble you. But I have an objection to telling them. They are my enemies. Let them find out."

"You are wrong, Lizzie. You do not want, or at any rate should not want, to have any secret in the matter."

"They are here, in the castle; in the very place in which Sir Florian kept them when he gave them to me. Where should my own jewels be but in my own house? What does that Mr. Dove say who was to be asked about them? No doubt they can pay a barrister to say anything."

"Lizzie, you think too hardly of people."

"And do not people think too hardly of me? Does not all this amount to an accusation against me that I am a thief? Am I not persecuted among them? Did not this impudent attorney stop me in the public street and accuse me of theft before my very servants? Have

they not so far succeeded in misrepresenting me that the very man who is engaged to be my husband betrays me? And now you are turning against me? Can you wonder that I am hard?"

"I am not turning against you."

"Yes; you are. You take their part and not mine in everything. I tell you what, Frank, I would go out in that boat that you see yonder and drop the bauble into the sea did I not know that they 'd drag it up again with their devilish ingenuity. If the stones would burn I would burn them. But the worst of it all is that you are becoming my enemy." Then she burst into violent and almost hysteric tears.

"It will be better that you should give them into the keeping of some one whom you can both trust, till the law has decided to whom they belong."

"I will never give them up. What does Mr. Dove say?"

"I have not seen what Mr. Dove says. It is clear that the necklace is not an heirloom."

"Then how dare Mr. Camperdown say so often that it was?"

"He said what he thought," pleaded Frank.

"And he is a lawyer!"

"I am a lawyer, and I did not know what is or what is not an heirloom. But Mr. Dove is clearly of opinion that such a property could not have been given away simply by a word of mouth." John Eustace in his letter had made no allusion to that complicated question of paraphernalia.

"But it was," said Lizzie. "Who can know but myself, when no one else was present?"

"The jewels are here now?"

"Not in my pocket. I do not carry them about with me. They are in the castle."

"And will they go back with you to London?"

"Was ever lady so interrogated? I do not know yet that I shall go back to London. Why am I asked such questions? As to you, Frank, I would tell you everything, my whole heart, if only you cared to know it. But why is John Eustace to make inquiry as to personal ornaments which are my own property? If I go to London I will take them there, and wear them at every house I enter. I will do so in defiance of Mr. Camperdown and Lord Fawn. I think, Frank, that no woman was ever so ill-treated as I am."

He himself thought that she was ill-treated. She had so pleaded her case, and had been so lovely in her tears and her indignation, that he began to feel something like true sympathy for her cause. What right had he, or had Mr. Camperdown, or any one, to say that the jewels did not belong to her? And if her claim to them was just, why should she be persuaded to give up the possession of them? He knew well that were she to surrender them with the idea that they should be restored to her if her claim were found to be just, she would not get them back very soon. If once the jewels were safe, locked up in Mr. Garnett's strong box, Mr. Camperdown would not care how long it might be before a jury or a judge should have decided on the case. The burden of proof would then be thrown upon Lady Eustace. In order that she might recover her own property she would have to thrust herself forward as a witness, and appear before the world a claimant, greedy for rich ornaments. Why should he advise her to give them up? "I am only think-

ing," said he, "what may be the best for your own peace."

"Peace!" she exclaimed. "How am I to have peace? Remember the condition in which I find myself! Remember the manner in which that man is treating me, when all the world has been told of my engagement to him! When I think of it my heart is so bitter that I am inclined to throw, not the diamonds, but myself, from off the rocks. All that remains to me is the triumph of getting the better of my enemies. Mr. Camperdown shall never have the diamonds. Even if they could prove that they did not belong to me they should find them — gone."

"I don't think they can prove it."

"I 'll flaunt them in the eyes of all of them till they do; and then — they shall be gone. And I 'll have such revenge on Lord Fawn before I have done with him that he shall know that it may be worse to have to fight a woman than a man. Oh, Frank, I do not think that I am hard by nature, but these things make a woman hard." As she spoke she took his hand in hers, and looked up into his eyes through her tears. "I know that you do not care for me and you know how much I care for you."

"Not care for you, Lizzie?"

"No; that little thing at Richmond is everything to you. She is tame and quiet, a cat that will sleep on the rug before the fire, and you think that she will never scratch. Do not suppose that I mean to abuse her. She was my dear friend before you had ever seen her. And men, I know, have tastes which women do not understand. You want what you call — repose."

"We seldom know what we want, I fancy. We

take what the gods send us." Frank's words were perhaps more true than wise. At the present moment the gods had clearly sent Lizzie Eustace to him, and unless he could call up some increased strength of his own, quite independent of the gods, or of what we may perhaps call chance, he would have to put up with the article sent.

Lizzie had declared that she would not touch Lord Fawn with a pair of tongs, and in saying so had resolved that she could not and would not now marry his lordship, even were his lordship in her power. It had been decided by her as quickly as thoughts flash, but it was decided. She would torture the unfortunate lord, but not torture him by becoming his wife. And, so much being fixed as the stars in heaven, might it be possible that she should even yet induce her cousin to take the place that had been intended for Lord Fawn? After all that had passed between them she need hardly hesitate to tell him of her love. And with the same flashing thoughts she declared to herself that she did love him, and that therefore this arrangement would be so much better than that other one which she had proposed to herself. The reader, perhaps, by this time, has not a high opinion of Lady Eustace, and may believe that among other drawbacks on her character there is especially this, that she was heartless. But that was by no means her own opinion of herself. She would have described herself — and would have meant to do so with truth — as being all heart. She probably thought that an over-amount of heart was the malady under which she specially suffered. Her heart was overflowing now toward the man who was sitting by her side. And then it would be so pleasant to punish that

little chit who had spurned her gift and had dared to call her mean! This man, too, was needy, and she was wealthy. Surely were she to offer herself to him the generosity of the thing would make it noble. She was still dissolved in tears and was still hysteric. "Oh, Frank!" she said, and threw herself upon his breast.

Frank Greystock felt his position to be one of intense difficulty, but whether this difficulty was increased or diminished by the appearance of Mr. Andy Gowran's head over a rock at the entrance of the little cave in which they were sitting it might be difficult to determine. But there was the head. And it was not a head that just popped itself up and then retreated, as a head would do that was discovered doing that which made it ashamed of itself. The head, with its eyes wide open, held its own, and seemed to say, "Ay, I 've caught you, have I?" And the head did speak, though not exactly in those words. "Coosins!" said the head; and then the head was wagged. In the meantime Lizzie Eustace, whose back was turned to the head, raised her own, and looked up into Greystock's eyes for love. She perceived at once that something was amiss, and, starting to her feet, turned quickly round.

"How dare you intrude here?" she said to the head.

"Coosins!" replied the head, wagging itself.

It was clearly necessary that Greystock should take some steps, if only with the object of proving to the impudent factotum that he was not altogether overcome by the awkwardness of his position. That he was a good deal annoyed, and that he felt not altogether quite equal to the occasion, must be acknowledged. "What is it that the man wants?" he said, glaring at the head.

"Coosins!" said the head, wagging itself again.

"If you don't take yourself off, I shall have to thrash you," said Frank.

"Coosins!" said Andy Gowran, stepping from behind the rock and showing his full figure. Andy was a man on the wrong side of fifty, and therefore on the score of age, hardly fit for thrashing. And he was compact, short, broad, and as hard as flint; a man bad to thrash, look at it from what side you would. "Coosins!" he said yet again. "Ye're mair couthie than coosinly, I'm thinking."

"Andy Gowran, I dismiss you my service for your impertinence," said Lady Eustace.

"It's ae one to Andy Gowran for that, my leddie. There's timber and a world o' things aboot the place as wants proteection on behalf o' the heir. If your leddieship is minded to be quit o' my sarvices, I'll find a maister in Mr. Camper-doon, as'll nae allow me to be thrown out o' employ. Coosins!"

"Walk off from this," said Frank Greystock, coming forward and putting his hand upon the man's breast. Mr. Gowran repeated the objectionable word yet once again, and then retired.

Frank Greystock immediately felt how very bad for him was his position. For the lady, if only she could succeed in her object, the annoyance of the interruption would not matter much after its first absurdity had been endured. When she had become the wife of Frank Greystock there would be nothing remarkable in the fact that she had been found sitting with him in a cavern by the seashore. But for Frank the difficulty of extricating himself from his dilemma was great, not in regard to Mr. Gowran, but in reference to his cousin

Lizzie. He might, it was true, tell her that he was engaged to Lucy Morris; but then why had he not told her so before? He had not told her so; nor did he tell her on this occasion. When he attempted to lead her away up the cliff she insisted on being left where she was. "I can find my way alone," she said, endeavouring to smile through her tears. "The man has annoyed me by his impudence, that is all. Go, if you are going."

Of course he was going; but he could not go without a word of tenderness. "Dear, dear Lizzie," he said, embracing her.

"Frank, you 'll be true to me?"

"I will be true to you."

"Then go now," she said. And he went his way up the cliff, and got his pony, and rode back to the cottage, very uneasy in his mind.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LUCY MORRIS MISBEHAVES.

Lucy Morris got her letter and was contented. She wanted some demonstration of love from her lover, but very little sufficed for her comfort. With her it was almost impossible that a man should be loved and suspected at the same time. She could not have loved the man, or at any rate confessed her love, without thinking well of him; and she could not think good and evil at the same time. She had longed for some word from him since she last saw him; and now she had got a word. She had known that he was close to his fair cousin — the cousin whom she despised, and whom, with womanly instinct, she had almost regarded as a rival. But to her the man had spoken out; and though he was far away from her, living close to the fair cousin, she would not allow a thought of trouble on that score to annoy her. He was her own, and let Lizzie Eustace do her worst, he would remain her own. But she had longed to be told that he was thinking of her, and at last the letter had come. She answered it that same night with the sweetest, prettiest little letter, very short, full of love and full of confidence. Lady Fawn, she said, was the dearest of women; but what

was Lady Fawn to her, or all the Fawns, compared with her lover? If he could come to Richmond without disturbance to himself, let him come; but if he felt that, in the present unhappy condition of affairs between him and Lord Fawn, it was better that he should stay away, she had not a word to say in the way of urging him. To see him would be a great delight. But had she not the greater delight of knowing that he loved her? That was quite enough to make her happy. Then there was a little prayer that God might bless him, and an assurance that she was in all things his own, own Lucy. When she was writing her letter she was in all respects a happy girl.

But on the very next day there came a cloud upon her happiness, not in the least, however, affecting her full confidence in her lover. It was a Saturday, and Lord Fawn came down to Richmond. Lord Fawn had seen Mr. Greystock in London on that day, and the interview had been by no means pleasant to him. The Under-Secretary of State for India was as dark as a November day when he reached his mother's house, and there fell upon every one the unintermittent cold drizzling shower of his displeasure from the moment in which he entered the house. There was never much reticence among the ladies at Richmond in Lucy's presence, and since the completion of Lizzie's unfortunate visit to Fawn Court they had not hesitated to express open opinions adverse to the prospects of the proposed bride. Lucy herself could say but little in defence of her old friend, who had lost all claim upon that friendship since the offer of the bribe had been made, so that it was understood among them all that Lizzie was to be regarded as a black sheep; but hitherto Lord Fawn

himself had concealed his feelings before Lucy. Now unfortunately he spoke out, and in speaking was especially bitter against Frank. "Mr. Greystock has been most insolent," he said as they were all sitting together in the library after dinner. Lady Fawn made a sign to him and shook her head. Lucy felt the hot blood fly into both her cheeks, but at the moment she did not speak. Lydia Fawn put out her hand beneath the table and took hold of Lucy's.

"We must all remember that he is her cousin," said Augusta.

"His relationship to Lady Eustace cannot justify ungentlemanlike impertinence to me," said Lord Fawn. "He has dared to use words to me which would make it necessary that I should call him out, only ——"

"Frederic, you shall do nothing of the kind," said Lady Fawn, jumping up from her chair.

"Oh, Frederic, pray, pray don't," said Augusta, springing on to her brother's shoulder.

"I am sure Frederic does not mean that," said Amelia.

"Only that nobody does call anybody out now," added the pacific lord. "But nothing on earth shall ever induce me to speak again to a man who is so little like a gentleman." Lydia now held Lucy's hand still tighter, as though to prevent her rising. "He has never forgiven me," continued Lord Fawn, "because he was so ridiculously wrong about the Sawab."

"I am sure that had nothing to do with it," said Lucy.

"Miss Morris, I shall venture to hold my own opinion," said Lord Fawn.

"And I shall hold mine," said Lucy bravely. "The

Sawab of Mygawb had nothing to do with what Mr. Greystock may have said or done about his cousin. I am quite sure of it."

"Lucy, you are forgetting yourself," said Lady Fawn.

"Lucy, dear, you should n't contradict my brother," said Augusta.

"Take my advice, Lucy, and let it pass by," said Amelia.

"How can I hear such things said and not notice them?" demanded Lucy. "Why does Lord Fawn say them when I am by?"

Lord Fawn had now condescended to be full of wrath against his mother's governess. "I suppose I may express my own opinion, Miss Morris, in my mother's house."

"And I shall express mine," said Lucy. "Mr. Greystock is a gentleman. If you say that he is not a gentleman, it is not true." Upon hearing these terrible words spoken, Lord Fawn rose from his seat and slowly left the room. Augusta followed him with both her arms stretched out. Lady Fawn covered her face with her hands, and even Amelia was dismayed.

"Oh, Lucy! why could you not hold your tongue?" said Lydia.

"I won't hold my tongue," said Lucy, bursting out into tears. "He is a gentleman."

Then there was great commotion at Fawn Court. After a few moments Lady Fawn followed her son without having said a word to Lucy, and Amelia went with her. Poor Lucy was left with the younger girls, and was no doubt very unhappy. But she was still indignant and would yield nothing. When Georgina, the fourth daughter, pointed out to her that, in accord-

ance with all rules of good breeding, she should have abstained from asserting that her brother had spoken an untruth, she blazed up again. "It was untrue," she said.

"But, Lucy, people never accuse each other of untruth. No lady should use such a word to a gentleman."

"He should not have said so. He knows that Mr. Greystock is more to me than all the world."

"If I had a lover," said Nina, "and anybody were to say a word against him, I know I 'd fly at them. I don't know why Frederic is to have it all his own way."

"Nina, you 're a fool," said Diana.

"I do think it was very hard for Lucy to bear," said Lydia.

"And I won't bear it," exclaimed Lucy. "To think that Mr. Greystock should be so mean as to bear malice about a thing like that wild Indian because he takes his own cousin's part! Of course I 'd better go away. You all think that Mr. Greystock is an enemy now; but he never can be an enemy to me."

"We think that Lady Eustace is an enemy," said Cecilia, "and a very nasty enemy, too."

"I did not say a word about Lady Eustace," said Lucy. "But Mr. Greystock is a gentleman."

About an hour after this Lady Fawn sent for Lucy, and the two were closeted together for a long time. Lord Fawn was very angry, and had hitherto altogether declined to overlook the insult offered. "I am bound to tell you," declared Lady Fawn, with much emphasis, "that nothing can justify you in having accused Lord Fawn of telling an untruth. Of course, I was sorry

that Mr. Greystock's name should have been mentioned in your presence; but as it was mentioned, you should have borne what was said with patience."

"I could n't be patient, Lady Fawn."

"That is what wicked people say when they commit murder, and then they are hung for it."

"I 'll go away, Lady Fawn ——"

"That is ungrateful, my dear. You know that I don't wish you to go away. But if you behave badly, of course I must tell you of it."

"I 'd sooner go away. Everybody here thinks ill of Mr. Greystock. But I don't think ill of Mr. Greystock, and I never shall. Why did Lord Fawn say such very hard things about him?"

It was suggested to her that she should be downstairs early the next morning, and apologise to Lord Fawn for her rudeness; but she would not, on that night, undertake to do any such thing. Let Lady Fawn say what she might, Lucy thought that the injury had been done to her, and not to his lordship. And so they parted hardly friends. Lady Fawn gave her no kiss as she went, and Lucy, with obstinate pride, altogether refused to own her fault. She would only say that she had better go, and when Lady Fawn over and over again pointed out to her that the last thing that such a one as Lord Fawn could bear was to be accused of an untruth, she would continue to say that in that case he should be careful to say nothing that was untrue. All this was very dreadful, and created great confusion and unhappiness at Fawn Court. Lydia came into her room that night, and the two girls talked the matter over for hours. In the morning Lucy was up early, and found Lord Fawn walking in

the grounds. She had been told that he would probably be found walking in the grounds, if she were willing to tender to him any apology.

Her mind had been very full of the subject — not only in reference to her lover, but as it regarded her own conduct. One of the elder Fawn girls had assured her that under no circumstances could a lady be justified in telling a gentleman that he had spoken an untruth, and she was not quite sure but that the law so laid down was right. And then she could not but remember that the gentleman in question was Lord Fawn, and that she was Lady Fawn's governess. But Mr. Greystock was her affianced lover, and her first duty was to him. And then, granting that she herself had been wrong in accusing Lord Fawn of untruth, she could not refrain from asking herself whether he had not been much more wrong in saying in her hearing that Mr. Greystock was not a gentleman? And his offence had preceded her offence, and had caused it! She hardly knew whether she did or did not owe an apology to Lord Fawn, but she was quite sure that Lord Fawn owed an apology to her.

She walked straight up to Lord Fawn, and met him beneath the trees. He was still black and solemn, and was evidently brooding over his grievance; but he bowed to her, and stood still as she approached him. "My lord," said she, "I am very sorry for what happened last night."

"And so was I, very sorry, Miss Morris."

"I think you know that I am engaged to marry Mr. Greystock?"

"I cannot allow that that has anything to do with it."

"When you think that he must be dearer to me than all the world, you will acknowledge that I could n't hear hard things said of him without speaking." His face became blacker than ever, but he made no reply. He wanted an abject begging of unconditional pardon from the little girl who loved his enemy. If that were done, he would vouchsafe his forgiveness; but he was too small by nature to grant it on other terms. "Of course," continued Lucy, "I am bound to treat you with special respect in Lady Fawn's house." She looked almost beseechingly into his face as she paused for a moment.

"But you treated me with especial disrespect," said Lord Fawn.

"And how did you treat me, Lord Fawn?"

"Miss Morris, I must be allowed, in discussing matters with my mother, to express my own opinions in such language as I may think fit to use. Mr. Greystock's conduct to me was — was — was altogether most ungentlemanlike."

"Mr. Greystock is a gentleman."

"His conduct was most offensive, and most ungentlemanlike. Mr. Greystock disgraced himself."

"It is n't true," said Lucy. Lord Fawn gave one start, and then walked off to the house as quick as his legs could carry him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. DOVE IN HIS CHAMBERS.

THE scene between Lord Fawn and Greystock had taken place in Mr. Camperdown's chambers, and John Eustace had also been present. The lawyer had suffered considerable annoyance, before the arrival of the two first-named gentlemen, from reiterated assertions made by Eustace that he would take no further trouble whatsoever about the jewels. Mr. Camperdown had in vain pointed out to him that a plain duty lay upon him as executor and guardian to protect the property on behalf of his nephew; but Eustace had asserted that, though he himself was comparatively a poor man, he would sooner replace the necklace out of his own property than be subject to the nuisance of such a continued quarrel. "My dear John; ten thousand pounds!" Mr. Camperdown had said. "It is a fortune for a younger son."

"The boy is only two years old, and will have time enough to make fortunes for his own younger sons, if he does not squander everything. If he does, ten thousand pounds will make no difference."

"But the justice of the thing, John!"

"Justice may be purchased too dearly."

"Such a harpy as she is, too!" pleaded the lawyer. Then Lord Fawn had come in, and Greystock had followed immediately afterward.

"I may as well say at once," said Greystock, "that Lady Eustace is determined to maintain her right to the property; and that she will not give up the diamonds till some adequate court of law shall have decided that she is mistaken in her views. Stop one moment, Mr. Camperdown. I feel myself bound to go further than that, and express my own opinion that she is right."

"I can hardly understand such an opinion as coming from you," said Mr. Camperdown.

"You have changed your mind, at any rate," said John Eustace.

"Not so, Eustace. Mr. Camperdown, you 'll be good enough to understand that my opinion expressed here is that of a friend, and not that of a lawyer. And you must understand, Eustace," continued Greystock, "that I am speaking now of my cousin's right to the property. Though the value be great, I have advised her to give up the custody of it for a while, till the matter shall be clearly decided. That has still been my advice to her, and I have in no respect changed my mind. But she feels that she is being cruelly used, and with a woman's spirit will not, in such circumstances, yield anything. Mr. Camperdown actually stopped her carriage in the street."

"She would not answer a line that anybody wrote to her," said the lawyer.

"And I may say plainly — for all here know the circumstances — that Lady Eustace feels the strongest possible indignation at the manner in which she is being treated by Lord Fawn."

"I have only asked her to give up the diamonds till the question should be settled," said Lord Fawn.

"And you backed your request, my lord, by a threat! My cousin is naturally most indignant; and, my lord, you must allow me to tell you that I fully share the feeling."

"There is no use in making a quarrel about it," said Eustace.

"The quarrel is already made," replied Greystock. "I am here to tell Lord Fawn in your presence, and in the presence of Mr. Camperdown, that he is behaving to a lady with ill-usage, which he would not dare to exercise did he not know that her position saves him from legal punishment, as do the present usages of society from other consequences."

"I have behaved to her with every possible consideration," said Lord Fawn.

"That is a simple assertion," said the other. "I have made one assertion, and you have made another. The world will have to judge between us. What right have you to take upon yourself to decide whether this thing or that belongs to Lady Eustace or to any one else?"

"When the thing was talked about I was obliged to have an opinion," said Lord Fawn, who was still thinking of words in which to reply to the insult offered him by Greystock without injury to his dignity as an Under-Secretary of State.

"Your conduct, sir, has been altogether inexcusable." Then Frank turned to the attorney. "I have been given to understand that you are desirous of knowing where this diamond necklace is at present. It is at Lady Eustace's house in Scotland; at Portray Castle." Then he shook hands with John Eustace, bowed to Mr. Camperdown, and succeeded in leaving the room

before Lord Fawn had so far collected his senses as to be able to frame his anger into definite words.

"I will never willingly speak to that man again," said Lord Fawn. But as it was not probable that Greystock would greatly desire any further conversation with Lord Fawn, this threat did not carry with it any powerful feeling of severity.

Mr. Camperdown groaned over the matter with thorough vexation of spirit. It seemed to him as though the harpy, as he called her, would really make good her case against him, at any rate would make it seem to be good for so long a time that all the triumph of success would be hers. He knew that she was already in debt, and gave her credit for a propensity to fast living, which almost did her an injustice. Of course the jewels would be sold for half their value, and the harpy would triumph. Of what use to him or to the estate would be a decision of the courts in his favour when the diamonds should have been broken up and scattered to the winds of heaven? Ten thousand pounds! It was, to Mr. Camperdown's mind, a thing quite terrible that, in a country which boasts of its laws and of the execution of its laws, such an impostor as was this widow should be able to lay her dirty, grasping fingers on so great an amount of property, and that there should be no means of punishing her. That Lizzie Eustace had stolen the diamonds, as a pickpocket steals a watch, was a fact as to which Mr. Camperdown had in his mind no shadow of a doubt. And, as the reader knows, he was right. She had stolen them. Mr. Camperdown knew that she had stolen them, and was a wretched man. From the first moment of the late Sir Florian's infatuation about this

woman, she had worked woe for Mr. Camperdown. Mr. Camperdown had striven hard, to the great and almost permanent offence of Sir Florian, to save Portray from its present condition of degradation; but he had striven in vain. Portray belonged to the harpy for her life; and moreover, he himself had been forced to be instrumental in paying over to the harpy a large sum of Eustace money almost immediately on her becoming a widow. Then had come the affair of the diamonds — an affair of ten thousand pounds! — as Mr. Camperdown would exclaim to himself, throwing his eyes up to the ceiling. And now it seemed that she was to get the better of him even in that, although there could not be a shadow of doubt as to her falsehood and fraudulent dishonesty! His luck in the matter was so bad! John Eustace had no backbone, no spirit, no proper feeling as to his own family. Lord Fawn was as weak as water, and almost disgraced the cause by the accident of his adherence to it. Greystock, who would have been a tower of strength, had turned against him, and was now prepared to maintain that the harpy was right. Mr. Camperdown knew that the harpy was wrong, that she was a harpy, and he would not abandon the cause; but the difficulties in his way were great and the annoyance to which he was subjected was excessive. His wife and daughters were still at Dawlish, and he was up in town in September, simply because the harpy had the present possession of these diamonds.

Mr. Camperdown was a man turned sixty, handsome, gray-haired, healthy, somewhat florid, and carrying in his face and person external signs of prosperity and that kind of self-assertion which prosperity always pro-

duces. But they who knew him best were aware that he did not bear trouble well. In any trouble, such as was this about the necklace, there would come over his face a look of weakness which betrayed the want of real inner strength. How many faces one sees which, in ordinary circumstances, are comfortable, self-asserting, sufficient, and even bold; the lines of which, under difficulties, collapse and become mean, spiritless, and insignificant. There are faces which, in their usual form, seem to bluster with prosperity, but which the loss of a dozen points at whist will reduce to that currish aspect which reminds one of a dog-whip. Mr. Camperdown's countenance, when Lord Fawn and Mr. Eustace left him, had fallen away into this meanness of appearance. He no longer carried himself as a man owning a dog-whip, but rather as the hound that feared it.

A better attorney for the purposes to which his life was devoted did not exist in London than Mr. Camperdown. To say that he was honest is nothing. To describe him simply as zealous would be to fall very short of his merits. The interests of his clients were his own interests, and the legal rights of the properties of which he had the legal charge were as dear to him as his own blood. But it could not be said of him that he was a learned lawyer. Perhaps in that branch of a solicitor's profession in which he had been called upon to work experience goes further than learning. It may be doubted, indeed, whether it is not so in every branch of every profession. But it might, perhaps, have been better for Mr. Camperdown had he devoted more hours of his youth to reading books on conveyancing. He was now too old for such studies, and could trust only

to the reading of other people. The reading, however, of other people was always at his command, and his clients were rich men who did not mind paying for an opinion. To have an opinion from Mr. Dove, or some other learned gentleman, was the every-day practice of his life; and when he obtained, as he often did, little coigns of legal vantage and subtle definitions as to property which were comfortable to him, he would rejoice to think that he could always have a Dove at his hand to tell him exactly how far he was justified in going in defence of his clients' interests. But now there had come to him no comfort from his corner of legal knowledge. Mr. Dove had taken extraordinary pains in the matter, and had simply succeeded in throwing over his employer. "A necklace can't be an heirloom!" said Mr. Camperdown to himself, telling off on his fingers half a dozen instances in which he had either known or had heard that the head of a family had so arranged the future possession of the family jewels. Then he again read Mr. Dove's opinion, and actually took a law-book off his shelves with the view of testing the correctness of the barrister in reference to some special assertion. A pot or a pan might be an heirloom, but not a necklace! Mr. Camperdown could hardly bring himself to believe that this was law. And then as to paraphernalia! Up to this moment, though he had been called upon to arrange great dealings in reference to widows, he had never as yet heard of a claim made by a widow for paraphernalia. But then the widows with whom he had been called upon to deal had been ladies quite content to accept the good things settled upon them by the liberal prudence of their friends and husbands, not greedy, blood-sucking

harpies such as this Lady Eustace. It was quite terrible to Mr. Camperdown that one of his clients should have fallen into such a pit. *Mors omnibus est communis.* But to have left such a widow behind one!

"John," he said, opening his door. John was his son and partner, and John came to him, having been summoned by a clerk from another room. "Just shut the door. I 've had such a scene here; Lord Fawn and Mr. Greystock almost coming to blows about that horrid woman."

"The Upper House would have got the worst of it, as it usually does," said the younger attorney.

"And there is John Eustace cares no more what becomes of the property than if he had nothing to do with it; absolutely talks of replacing the diamonds out of his own pocket; a man whose personal interest in the estate is by no means equal to her own."

"He would n't do it, you know," said Camperdown Junior, who did not know the family.

"It 's just what he would do," said the father, who did. "There 's nothing they would n't give away when once the idea takes them. Think of that woman having the whole Portray estate, perhaps for the next sixty years — nearly the fee-simple of the property — just because she made eyes to Sir Florian."

"That 's done and gone, father."

"And here 's Dove tells us that a necklace can't be an heirloom unless it belongs to the Crown."

"Whatever he says, you 'd better take his word for it."

"I 'm not so sure of that! It can't be. I 'll tell you what I 'll do. I 'll go over and see him. We can

file a bill in Chancery, I don't doubt, and prove that the property belongs to the family and must go by the will. But she 'll sell them before we can get the custody of them."

"Perhaps she has done that already."

"Greystock says they are at Portray, and I believe they are. She was wearing them in London only in July, a day or two before I saw her as she was leaving town. If anybody like a jeweller had been down at the castle, I should have heard of it. She has n't sold 'em yet, but she will."

"She could do that just the same if they were an heirloom."

"No, John. I think not. We could have acted much more quickly and have frightened her."

"If I were you, father, I 'd drop the matter altogether and let John Eustace replace them if he pleases. We all know that he would never be called on to do anything of the kind. It is n't our sort of business."

"Not ten thousand pounds!" said Camperdown Senior, to whom the magnitude of the larceny almost ennobled the otherwise mean duty of catching the thief. Then Mr. Camperdown rose, and slowly walked across the New Square, Lincoln's Inn, under the low archway, by the entrance to the old court in which Lord Eldon used to sit, to the Old Square, in which the Turtle Dove had built his legal nest on a first floor, close to the old gateway.

Mr. Dove was a gentleman who spent a very great portion of his life in this somewhat gloomy abode of learning. It was not now term time, and most of his brethren were absent from London, recruiting their

strength among the Alps, or drinking in vigour for fresh campaigns with the salt sea breezes of Kent and Sussex, or perhaps shooting deer in Scotland, or catching fish in Connemara. But Mr. Dove was a man of iron, who wanted no such recreation. To be absent from his law-books and the black, littered, ink-stained old table on which he was wont to write his opinions, was, to him, to be wretched. The only exercise necessary to him was that of putting on his wig and going into one of the courts that were close to his chambers; but even that was almost distasteful to him. He preferred sitting in his old arm-chair, turning over his old books in search of old cases, and producing opinions which he would be prepared to back against all the world of Lincoln's Inn. He and Mr. Camperdown had known each other intimately for many years, and though the rank of the two men in their profession differed much, they were able to discuss questions of law without any appreciation of that difference between themselves. The one man knew much, and the other little; the one was not only learned, but possessed also of great gifts, while the other was simply an ordinary clear-headed man of business; but they had sympathies in common which made them friends; they were both honest and unwilling to sell their services to dishonest customers; and they equally entertained a deep-rooted contempt for that portion of mankind who thought that property could be managed and protected without the intervention of lawyers. The outside world to them was a world of pretty, laughing, ignorant children; and lawyers were the parents, guardians, pastors, and masters, by whom the children should be protected from the evils incident to their childishness.

"There is a common error about heirlooms."

"Yes, sir; he 's here," said the Turtle Dove's clerk. "He is talking of going away, but he won't go. He 's told me I can have a week, but I don't know that I like to leave him. Mrs. Dove and the children are down at Ramsgate, and he 's here all night. He had n't been out for so long that when he wanted to go as far as the Temple yesterday we could n't find his hat." Then the clerk opened the door, and ushered Mr. Camperdown into the room. Mr. Dove was the younger man by five or six years, and his hair was still black. Mr. Camperdown's was nearer white than gray; but, nevertheless, Mr. Camperdown looked as though he were the younger man. Mr. Dove was a long, thin man, with a stoop in his shoulders, with deep-set, hollow eyes, and lantern cheeks, and sallow complexion, with long, thin hands, who seemed to acknowledge by every movement of his body and every tone of his voice that old age was creeping on him; whereas the attorney's step was still elastic, and his speech brisk. Mr. Camperdown wore a blue frock-coat, and a coloured cravat, and a light waistcoat. With Mr. Dove every visible article of his raiment was black, except his shirt, and he had that peculiar blackness which a man achieves when he wears a dress-coat over a high black waistcoat in the morning.

"You did n't make much, I fear, of what I sent you about heirlooms," said Mr. Dove, divining the purport of Mr. Camperdown's visit.

"A great deal more than I wanted, I can assure you, Mr. Dove."

"There is a common error about heirlooms."

"Very common, indeed, I should say. God bless

my soul! when one knows how often the word occurs in family deeds, it does startle one to be told that there is n't any such thing."

"I don't think I said quite so much as that. Indeed, I was careful to point out that the law does acknowledge heirlooms."

"But not diamonds," said the attorney.

"I doubt whether I went quite so far as that."

"Only the Crown diamonds."

"I don't think I even debarred all other diamonds. A diamond in a star of honour might form a part of an heirloom; but I do not think that a diamond itself could be an heirloom."

"If in a star of honour, why not in a necklace?" argued Mr. Camperdown almost triumphantly.

"Because a star of honour, unless tampered with by fraud, would naturally be maintained in its original form. The setting of a necklace will probably be altered from generation to generation. The one, like a picture or a precious piece of furniture ——"

"Or a pot or a pan," said Mr. Camperdown, with sarcasm.

"Pots and pans may be precious, too," replied Mr. Dove. "Such things can be traced, and can be held as heirlooms without imposing too great difficulties on their guardians. The Law is generally very wise and prudent, Mr. Camperdown; much more so often than are they who attempt to improve it."

"I quite agree with you there, Mr. Dove."

"Would the Law do a service, do you think, if it lent its authority to the special preservation in special hands of trinkets only to be used for vanity and ornament? Is that a kind of property over which an

owner should have a power of disposition more lasting, more autocratic, than is given him even in regard to land? The land, at any rate, can be traced. It is a thing fixed and known. A string of pearls is not only alterable, but constantly altered, and cannot easily be traced."

"Property of such enormous value should, at any rate, be protected," said Mr. Camperdown indignantly.

"All property is protected, Mr. Camperdown; although, as we know too well, such protection can never be perfect. But the system of heirlooms, if there can be said to be such a system, was not devised for what you and I mean when we talk of protection of property."

"I should have said that that was just what it was devised for."

"I think not. It was devised with the more picturesque idea of maintaining chivalric associations. Heirlooms have become so, not that the future owners of them may be assured of so much wealth, whatever the value of the thing so settled may be, but that the son or grandson or descendant may enjoy the satisfaction which is derived from saying, My father or my grandfather or my ancestor sat in that chair, or looked as he now looks in that picture, or was graced by wearing on his breast that very ornament which you now see lying beneath the glass. Crown jewels are heirlooms in the same way, as representing not the possession of the sovereign, but the time-honoured dignity of the Crown. The Law, which, in general, concerns itself with our property or lives and our liberties, has in this matter bowed gracefully to the spirit of chivalry and has lent its aid to romance! but it certainly did not do

so to enable the discordant heirs of a rich man to settle a simple dirty question of money, which, with ordinary prudence, the rich man should himself have settled before he died."

The Turtle Dove had spoken with emphasis and had spoken well, and Mr. Camperdown had not ventured to interrupt him while he was speaking. He was sitting far back on his chair, but with his neck bent and with his head forward, rubbing his long thin hands slowly over each other, and with his deep bright eyes firmly fixed on his companion's face. Mr. Camperdown had not unfrequently heard him speak in the same fashion before, and was accustomed to his manner of unravelling the mysteries and searching into the causes of Law with a spirit which almost lent a poetry to the subject. When Mr. Dove would do so, Mr. Camperdown would not quite understand the words spoken, but he would listen to them with an undoubting reverence. And he did understand them in part, and was conscious of an infusion of a certain amount of poetic spirit into his own bosom. He would think of these speeches afterwards, and would entertain high but somewhat cloudy ideas of the beauty and the majesty of Law. Mr. Dove's speeches did Mr. Camperdown good, and helped to preserve him from that worst of all diseases, a low idea of humanity.

"You think, then, we had better not claim them as heirlooms?" he asked.

"I think you had better not."

"And you think that she could claim them — as paraphernalia?"

"That question has hardly been put to me, though I allowed myself to wander into it. But for my intimacy

with you, I should hardly have ventured to stray so far."

"I need hardly say how much obliged we are. But we will submit one or two other cases to you."

"I am inclined to think the court would not allow them to her as paraphernalia, seeing that their value is excessive as compared with her income and degree; but if it did, it would do so in a fashion that would guard them from alienation."

"She would sell them — under the rose."

"Then she would be guilty of stealing them, which she would hardly attempt, even if not restrained by honesty, knowing, as she would know, that the greatness of the value would almost assuredly lead to detection. The same feeling would prevent buyers from purchasing."

"She says, you know, that they were given to her, absolutely."

"I should like to know the circumstances."

"Yes; of course."

"But I should be disposed to think that in equity no allegation by the receiver of such a gift, unsubstantiated either by evidence or by deed, would be allowed to stand. The gentleman left behind him a will, and regular settlements. I should think that the possession of these diamonds — not, I presume, touched on in the settlements ——"

"Oh dear no; not a word about them."

"I should think, then, that, subject to any claim to paraphernalia, the possession of the diamonds would be ruled by the will." Mr. Camperdown was rushing into the further difficulty of chattels in Scotland and those in England, when the Turtle Dove stopped him,

declaring that he could not venture to discuss matters as to which he knew none of the facts.

"Of course not; of course not," said Mr. Camperdown. "We 'll have cases prepared. I 'd apologise for coming at all, only that I get so much from a few words."

"I 'm always delighted to see you, Mr. Camperdown," said the Turtle Dove, bowing.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I HAD BETTER GO AWAY.

When Lord Fawn gave a sudden jump and stalked away towards the house on that Sunday morning before breakfast, Lucy Morris was a very unhappy girl. She had a second time accused Lord Fawn of speaking an untruth. She did not quite understand the usages of the world in the matter; but she did know that the one offence which a gentleman is supposed never to commit is that of speaking an untruth. The offence may be one committed oftener than any other by gentlemen — as also by all other people; but, nevertheless, it is regarded by the usages of society as being the one thing which a gentleman never does. Of all this Lucy understood something. The word "lie" she knew to be utterly abominable. That Lizzie Eustace was a little liar had been acknowledged between herself and the Fawn girls very often; but to have told Lady Eustace that any word spoken by her was a lie would have been a worse crime than the lie itself. To have brought such an accusation, in that form, against Lord Fawn, would have been to degrade herself forever. Was there any difference between a lie and an untruth? That one must be, and that the other need not be intentional, she did feel; but she felt also that the less offensive word had come to mean a lie — the world

having been driven so to use it because the world did not dare to talk about lies; and this word, bearing such a meaning in common parlance, she had twice applied to Lord Fawn. And yet, as she was well aware, Lord Fawn had told no lie. He had himself believed every word that he had spoken against Frank Greystock. That he had been guilty of unmanly cruelty in so speaking of her lover in her presence Lucy still thought, but she should not therefore have accused him of falsehood. "It was untrue all the same," she said to herself, as she stood still on the gravel walk, watching the rapid disappearance of Lord Fawn, and endeavouring to think what she had better now do with herself. Of course Lord Fawn, like a great child, would at once go and tell his mother what that wicked governess had said to him.

In the hall she met her friend Lydia. "Oh, Lucy, what is the matter with Frederic?" she asked.

"Lord Fawn is very angry indeed."

"With you?"

"Yes; with me. He is so angry that I am sure he would not sit down to breakfast with me. So I won't come down. Will you tell your mamma? If she likes to send to me, of course I'll go to her at once."

"What have you done, Lucy?"

"I've told him again that what he said was n't true."

"But why?"

"Because — oh, how can I say why? Why does any person do everything that she ought not to do? It 's the fall of Adam, I suppose."

"You should n't make a joke of it, Lucy."

"You can have no conception how unhappy I am about it. Of course Lady Fawn will tell me to go away.

I went out on purpose to beg his pardon for what I said last night, and I just said the very same thing again."

"But why did you say it?"

"And I should say it again and again and again, if he were to go on telling me that Mr. Greystock is n't a gentleman. I don't think he ought to have done it. Of course I have been very wrong; I know that. But I think he has been wrong too. But I must own it and he need n't. I 'll go up now and stay in my own room till your mamma sends for me."

"And I 'll get Jane to bring you some breakfast."

"I don't care a bit about breakfast," said Lucy.

Lord Fawn did tell his mother, and Lady Fawn was perplexed in the extreme. She was divided in her judgment and feelings between the privilege due to Lucy as a girl possessed of an authorised lover — a privilege which no doubt existed, but which was not extensive — and the very much greater privilege which attached to Lord Fawn as a man, as a peer, as an Under-Secretary of State, but which attached to him especially as the head and only man belonging to the Fawn family. Such a one, when, moved by filial duty, he condescends to come once a week to his mother's house, is entitled to say whatever he pleases, and should on no account be contradicted by any one. Lucy no doubt had a lover, an authorised lover; but perhaps that fact could not be taken as more than a balancing weight against the inferiority of her position as a governess. Lady Fawn was of course obliged to take her son's part and would scold Lucy. Lucy must be scolded very seriously. But it would be a thing so desirable if Lucy could be induced to accept her scolding and have done with it, and not to make matters worse by talking

of going away! "You don't mean that she came out into the shrubbery, having made up her mind to be rude to you?" said Lady Fawn to her son.

"No; I do not think that. But her temper is so ungovernable, and she has, if I may say so, been so spoiled among you here — I mean by the girls, of course — that she does not know how to restrain herself."

"She is as good as gold, you know, Frederic." He shrugged his shoulders and declared that he had not a word more to say about it. He could of course remain in London till it should suit Mr. Greystock to take his bride. "You'll break my heart if you say that," exclaimed the unhappy mother. "Of course she shall leave the house if you wish it."

"I wish nothing," said Lord Fawn. "But I peculiarly object to be told that I am a — liar." Then he stalked away along the corridor and went down to breakfast as black as a thundercloud.

Lady Fawn and Lucy sat opposite to each other in church, but they did not speak till the afternoon. Lady Fawn went to church in the carriage and Lucy walked, and as Lucy retired to her room immediately on her return to the house, there had not been an opportunity even for a word. After lunch Amelia came up to her and sat down for a long discussion. "Now, Lucy, something must be done, you know," said Amelia.

"I suppose so."

"Of course mamma must see you. She can't allow things to go on in this way. Mamma is very unhappy, and did n't eat a morsel of breakfast." By this latter assertion Amelia simply intended to imply that her mother had refused to be helped a second time to fried bacon, as was customary.

"Of course I shall go to her the moment she sends for me. Oh, I am so unhappy!"

"I don't wonder at that, Lucy. So is my brother unhappy. These things make people unhappy. It is what the world calls temper, you know, Lucy."

"Why did he tell me that Mr. Greystock is n't a gentleman? Mr. Greystock is a gentleman. I meant to say nothing more than that."

"But you did say more, Lucy."

"When he said that Mr. Greystock was n't a gentleman I told him it was n't true. Why did he say it? He knows all about it. Everybody knows. Would you think it wise to come and abuse him to me when you know what he is to me? I can't bear it, and I won't. I 'll go away to-morrow if your mamma wishes it." But that going away was just what Lady Fawn did not wish.

"I think you know, Lucy, you should express your deep sorrow at what has passed."

"To your brother?"

"Yes."

"Then he would abuse Mr. Greystock again, and it would all be as bad as ever. I 'll beg Lord Fawn's pardon if he 'll promise beforehand not to say a word about Mr. Greystock."

"You can't expect him to make a bargain like that, Lucy."

"I suppose not. I dare say I 'm very wicked, and I must be left wicked. I 'm too wicked to stay here. That 's the long and the short of it."

"I 'm afraid you 're proud, Lucy."

"I suppose I am. If it was n't for all that I owe to everybody here, and that I love you all so much, I

should be proud of being proud, because of Mr. Greystock. Only it kills me to make Lady Fawn unhappy."

Amelia left the culprit, feeling that no good had been done, and Lady Fawn did not see the delinquent till late in the afternoon. Lord Fawn had in the mean time wandered out along the river all alone to brood over the condition of his affairs. It had been an evil day for him in which he had first seen Lady Eustace. From the first moment of his engagement to her he had been an unhappy man. Her treatment of him, the stories which reached his ears from Mrs. Hittaway and others, Mr. Camperdown's threats of law in regard to the diamonds, and Frank Greystock's insults, altogether made him aware that he could not possibly marry Lady Eustace. But yet he had no proper and becoming way of escaping from the bonds of his engagement. He was a man with a conscience, and was made miserable by the idea of behaving badly to a woman. Perhaps it might have been difficult to analyse his misery and to decide how much arose from the feeling that he was behaving badly, and how much from the conviction that the world would accuse him of doing so; but between the two he was wretched enough. The punishment of the offence had been commenced by Greystock's unavenged insults, and it now seemed to him that this girl's conduct was a continuation of it. The world was already beginning to treat him with that want of respect which he so greatly dreaded. He knew that he was too weak to stand up against a widely-spread expression of opinion that he had behaved badly. There are men who can walk about the streets with composed countenances, take their seats in Parliament if they happen to have seats, work in their offices or their chambers or

their counting-houses with diligence, and go about the world serenely, even though everybody be saying evil of them behind their backs. Such men can live down temporary calumny, and almost take a delight in the isolation which it will produce. Lord Fawn knew well that he was not such a man. He would have described his own weakness as caused, perhaps, by a too thin-skinned sensitiveness. Those who knew him were inclined to say that he lacked strength of character, and perhaps courage.

He had certainly engaged himself to marry this widow, and he was most desirous to do what was right. He had said that he would not marry her unless she would give up the necklace, and he was most desirous to be true to his word. He had been twice insulted, and he was anxious to support these injuries with dignity. Poor Lucy's little offence against him rankled in his mind with the other great offences. That this humble friend of his mother's should have been so insolent was a terrible thing to him. He was not sure even whether his own sisters did not treat him with scantier reverence than of yore. And yet he was so anxious to do right, and do his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him! As to much he was in doubt; but of two things he was quite sure — that Frank Greystock was a scoundrel, and that Lucy Morris was the most impertinent young woman in England.

"What would you wish to have done, Frederic?" his mother said to him on his return.

"In what respect, mother?"

"About Lucy Morris? I have not seen her yet. I have thought it better that she should be left to herself

for a while before I did so. I suppose she must come down to dinner. She always does."

"I do not wish to interfere with the young lady's meals."

"No; but about meeting her? If there is to be no talking, it will be so very unpleasant. It will be unpleasant to us all, but I am thinking chiefly of you."

"I do not wish anybody to be disturbed for my comfort." A young woman coming down to dinner as though in disgrace, and not being spoken to by any one, would in truth have had rather a soothing effect upon Lord Fawn, who would have felt that the general silence and dulness had been produced as a sacrifice in his honour.

"I can, of course, insist that she should apologise; but if she refuses, what shall I do then?"

"Let there be no more apologies if you please, mother."

"What shall I do then, Frederic?"

"Miss Morris's idea of an apology is a repetition of her offence with increased rudeness. It is not for me to say what you should do. If it be true that she is engaged to that man ——"

"It is true, certainly."

"No doubt that will make her quite independent of you, and I can understand that her presence here in such circumstances must be very uncomfortable to you all. No doubt she feels her power."

"Indeed, Frederic, you do not know her."

"I can hardly say that I desire to know her better. You cannot suppose that I can be anxious for further intimacy with a young lady who has twice given me the lie in your house. Such conduct is, at least, very un-

usual; and as no absolute punishment can be inflicted, the offender can only be avoided. It is thus, and thus only, that such offences can be punished. I shall be satisfied if you will give her to understand that I should prefer that she should not address me again."

Poor Lady Fawn was beginning to think that Lucy was right in saying that there was no remedy for all these evils but that she should go away. But whither was she to go? She had no home but such home as she could earn for herself by her services as a governess, and in her present position it was almost out of the question that she should seek another place. Lady Fawn, too, felt that she had pledged herself to Mr. Greystock that till next year Lucy should have a home at Fawn Court. Mr. Greystock, indeed, was now an enemy to the family; but Lucy was not an enemy, and it was out of the question that she should be treated with real enmity. She might be scolded, and scowled at, and put into a kind of drawing-room Coventry for a time, so that all kindly intercourse with her should be confined to schoolroom work and bedroom conferences. She could be generally "sat upon," as Nina would call it. But as for quarrelling with her, making a real enemy of one whom they all loved, one whom Lady Fawn knew to be "as good as gold," one who had become so dear to the old lady that actual extrusion from their family affections would be like the cutting off of a limb, that was simply impossible. "I suppose I had better go and see her," said Lady Fawn, "and I have got such a headache!"

"Do not see her on my account," said Lord Fawn. The duty, however, was obligatory, and Lady Fawn with slow steps sought Lucy in the schoolroom.

"Lucy," she said, seating herself, "what is to be the end of all this?"

Lucy came up to her and knelt at her feet. "If you knew how unhappy I am because I have vexed you."

"I am unhappy, my dear, because I think you have been betrayed by warm temper into misbehaviour."

"I know I have."

"Then why do you not control your temper?"

"If anybody were to come to you, Lady Fawn, and make horrible accusations against Lord Fawn or against Augusta, would not you be angry? Would you be able to stand it?"

Lady Fawn was not clear-headed; she was not clever; nor was she even always rational. But she was essentially honest. She knew that she would fly at anybody who should in her presence say such bitter things of any of her children as Lord Fawn had said of Mr. Greystock in Lucy's hearing; and she knew also that Lucy was entitled to hold Mr. Greystock as dearly as she held her own son and daughters. Lord Fawn, at Fawn Court, could not do wrong. That was a tenet by which she was obliged to hold fast. And yet Lucy had been subjected to great cruelty. She thought awhile for a valid argument. "My dear," she said, "your youth should make a difference."

"Of course it should."

"Though to me and to the girls you are as dear as any friend can be, and may say just what you please. Indeed, we all live here in such a way that we all do say just what we please, young and old together. But you ought to know that Lord Fawn is different."

"Ought he to say that Mr. Greystock is not a gentleman to me?"

"We are, of course, very sorry that there should be any quarrel. It is all the fault of that — nasty, false young woman."

"So it is, Lady Fawn. Lady Fawn, I have been thinking about it all the day, and I am quite sure that I had better not stay here while you and the girls think badly of Mr. Greystock. It is not only about Lord Fawn, but because of the whole thing. I am always wanting to say something good about Mr. Greystock, and you are always thinking something bad about him. You have been to me, oh, the very best friend that a girl ever had. Why you should have treated me so generously I never could know."

"Because we have loved you."

"But when a girl has got a man whom she loves, and has promised to marry, he *must* be her best friend of all. Is it not so, Lady Fawn?" The old woman stooped down and kissed the girl who had got the man. "It is not ingratitude to you that makes me think most of him; is it?"

"Certainly not, dear."

"Then I had better go away."

"But where will you go, Lucy?"

"I will consult Mr. Greystock."

"But what can he do, Lucy? It will only be a trouble to him. He can't find a home for you."

"Perhaps they would have me at the deanery," said Lucy slowly. She had evidently been thinking much of it all. "And, Lady Fawn, I will not go downstairs while Lord Fawn is here; and when he comes, if he does come again while I am here, he shall not be troubled by seeing me. He may be sure of that. And you may tell him that I don't defend myself, only I

shall always think that he ought not to have said that Mr. Greystock was n't a gentleman before me." When Lady Fawn left Lucy the matter was so far settled that Lucy had neither been asked to come down to dinner, nor had she been forbidden to seek another home.

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. GREYSTOCK'S TROUBLES.

Frank Greystock stayed the Sunday in London and went down to Bobsborough on the Monday. His father and mother and sister all knew of his engagement to Lucy, and they had heard also that Lady Eustace was to become Lady Fawn. Of the necklace they had hitherto heard very little, and of the quarrel between the two lovers they had heard nothing. There had been many misgivings at the deanery, and some regrets, about these marriages. Mrs. Greystock, Frank's mother, was, as we are so wont to say of many women, the best woman in the world. She was unselfish, affectionate, charitable, and thoroughly feminine. But she did think that her son Frank, with all his advantages, good looks, cleverness, general popularity, and seat in Parliament, might just as well marry an heiress as a little girl without twopence in the world. As for herself, who had been born a Jackson, she could do with very little; but the Greystocks were all people who wanted money. For them there was never more than ninepence in a shilling, if so much. They were a race who could not pay their way with moderate incomes. Even the dear dean, who really had a conscience about money, and who hardly ever left Bobsborough, could not be kept quite clear of debt, let her do what she would. As for the admiral, the dean's elder brother, he had been no-

torious for insolvency; and Frank was a Greystock all over. He was the very man to whom money with a wife was almost a necessity of existence.

And his pretty cousin, the widow, who was devoted to him, and would have married him at a word, had ever so many thousands a year! Of course Lizzie Eustace was not just all that she should be; but then who is? In one respect, at any rate, her conduct had always been proper. There was no rumour against her as to lovers or flirtations. She was very young, and Frank might have moulded her as he pleased. Of course there were regrets. Poor dear little Lucy Morris was as good as gold. Mrs. Greystock was quite willing to admit that. She was not good-looking; so at least Mrs. Greystock said. She never would allow that Lucy was good-looking. And she did n't see much in Lucy, who, according to her idea, was a little chit of a thing. Her position was simply that of a governess. Mrs. Greystock declared to her daughter that no one in the whole world had a higher respect for governesses than had she. But a governess is a governess; and for a man in Frank's position such a marriage would be simply suicide.

"You should n't say that, mamma, now; for it 's fixed," said Ellinor Greystock.

"But I do say it, my dear. Things sometimes are fixed which must be unfixed. You know your brother."

"Frank is earning a large income, mamma."

"Did you ever know a Greystock who did n't want more than his income?"

"I hope I don't, mamma, and mine is very small."

"You 're a Jackson. Frank is Greystock to the

very backbone. If he marries Lucy Morris he must give up Parliament. That 's all."

The dean himself was more reticent and less given to interference than his wife; but he felt it also. He would not for the world have hinted to his son that it might be well to marry money; but he thought that it was a good thing that his son should go where money was. He knew that Frank was apt to spend his guineas faster than he got them. All his life long the dean had seen what came of such spending. Frank had gone out into the world and had prospered, but he could hardly continue to prosper unless he married money. Of course there had been regrets when the news came of that fatal engagement with Lucy Morris. "It can't be for the next ten years, at any rate," said Mrs. Greystock.

"I thought at one time that he would have made a match with his cousin," said the dean.

"Of course; so did everybody," replied Mrs. Dean.

Then Frank came among them. He had intended staying some weeks, perhaps for a month, and great preparations were made for him; but immediately on his arrival he announced the necessity that was incumbent on him of going down again to Scotland in ten days. "You 've heard about Lizzie, of course;" he said. They had heard that Lizzie was to become Lady Fawn, but beyond that they had heard nothing. "You know about the necklace?" asked Frank. Something of a tale of a necklace had made its way even down to quiet Bobsborough. They had been informed that there was a dispute between the widow and the executors of the late Sir Florian about some diamonds. "Lord Fawn is behaving about it in the most atro-

cious manner," continued Frank, "and the long and the short of it is that there will be no marriage!"

"No marriage!" exclaimed Mrs. Greystock.

"And what is the truth about the diamonds?" asked the dean.

"Ah; it will give the lawyers a job before they decide that. They're very valuable; worth about ten thousand pounds, I'm told; but the most of it will go among some of my friends at the Chancery bar. It's a pity that I should be out of the scramble myself."

"But why should you be out?" asked his mother with tender regrets, not thinking of the matter as her son was thinking of it, but feeling that when there was so much wealth so very near him, he ought not to let it all go past him.

"As far as I can see," continued Frank, "she has a fair claim to them. I suppose they'll file a bill in Chancery, and then it will be out of my line altogether. She says her husband gave them to her, absolutely put them on her neck himself, and told her that they were hers. As to their being an heirloom, that turns out to be impossible. I did n't know it, but it seems you can't make diamonds an heirloom. What astonishes me is, that Fawn should object to the necklace. However, he has objected, and has simply told her that he won't marry her unless she gives them up."

"And what does she say?"

"Storms and raves, as of course any woman would. I don't think she is behaving badly. What she wants is, to reduce him to obedience, and then to dismiss him. I think that is no more than fair. Nothing on earth would make her marry him now."

"Did she ever care for him?"

"I don't think she ever did. She found her position to be troublesome, and she thought she had better marry. And then he 's a lord, which always goes for something."

"I am sorry you should have so much trouble," said Mrs. Greystock. But in truth the mother was not sorry. She did not declare to herself that it would be a good thing that her son should be false to Lucy Morris in order that he might marry his rich cousin; but she did feel it to be an advantage that he should be on terms of intimacy with so large an income as that belonging to Lady Eustace. "Doan't thou marry for munny, but goa where munny is." Mrs. Greystock would have repudiated the idea of mercenary marriages in any ordinary conversation, and would have been severe on any gentleman who was false to a young lady. But it is so hard to bring one's general principles to bear on one's own conduct or in one's own family; and then the Greystocks were so peculiar a people! When her son told her that he must go down to Scotland again very shortly, she reconciled herself to his loss. Had he left Bobsborough for the sake of being near Lucy at Richmond, she would have felt it very keenly.

Days passed by, and nothing was said about poor Lucy. Mrs. Greystock had made up her mind that she would say nothing on the subject. Lucy had behaved badly in allowing herself to be loved by a man who ought to have loved money, and Mrs. Greystock had resolved that she would show her feelings by silence. The dean had formed no fixed determination, but he had thought that it might be, perhaps, as well to

drop the subject. Frank himself was unhappy about it; but from morning to evening, and from day to day, he allowed it to pass by without a word. He knew that it should not be so, that silence was in truth treachery to Lucy; but he was silent. What had he meant when, as he left Lizzie Eustace among the rocks at Portray, in that last moment, he had assured her that he would be true to her? And what had been Lizzie's meaning? He was more sure of Lizzie's meaning than he was of his own. "It 's a very rough world to live in," he said to himself, in these days, as he thought of his difficulties.

But when he had been nearly a week at the deanery, and when the day of his going was so near as to be a matter of concern, his sister did at last venture to say a word about Lucy. "I suppose there is nothing settled about your own marriage, Frank?"

"Nothing at all."

"Nor will be for some while?"

"Nor will be for some while." This he said in a tone which he himself felt to be ill-humoured and almost petulant. And he felt also that such ill-humour on such a subject was unkind, not to his sister, but to Lucy. It seemed to imply that the matter of his marriage was distasteful to him. "The truth is," he said, "that nothing can be fixed. Lucy understands that as well as I do. I am not in a position at once to marry a girl who has nothing. It 's a pity, perhaps, that one can't train one's self to like some girl best that has got money; but as I have n't there must be some delay. She is to stay where she is, at any rate for a twelvemonth."

"But you mean to see her?"

"Well, yes; I hardly know how I can see her, as I

have quarrelled to the knife with Lord Fawn; and Lord Fawn is recognised by his mother and sisters as the one living Jupiter upon earth."

"I like them for that," said Ellinor.

"Only it prevents my going to Richmond; and poor Fawn himself is such an indifferent Jupiter."

That was all that was said about Lucy at Bobsborough, till there came a letter from Lucy to her lover acquainting him with the circumstances of her unfortunate position at Richmond. She did not tell him quite all the circumstances. She did not repeat the strong expressions which Lord Fawn had used, nor did she clearly explain how wrathful she had been herself. "Lord Fawn has been here," she said, "and there has been ever so much unpleasantness. He is very angry with you about Lady Eustace, and of course Lady Fawn takes his part. I need not tell you whose part I take. And so there have been what the servants call, just a few words. It is very dreadful, is n't it? And, after all, Lady Fawn has been as kind as possible. But the upshot of it is that I am not to stay here. You must n't suppose that I 'm to be turned out at twelve hours' notice. I am to stay till arrangements have been made, and everybody will be kind to me. But what had I better do? I 'll try and get another situation at once if you think it best, only I suppose I should have to explain how long I could stay. Lady Fawn knows that I am writing to you to ask you what you think best."

On receipt of this Greystock was very much puzzled. What a little fool Lucy had been, and yet what a dear little fool! Who cared for Lord Fawn and his hard words? Of course Lord Fawn would say all manner

of evil things of him, and would crow valiantly in his own farmyard; but it would have been so much wiser on Lucy's part to have put up with the crowing, and to have disregarded altogether the words of a man so weak and insignificant! But the evil was done, and he must make some arrangement for poor Lucy's comfort. Had he known exactly how matters stood, that the proposition as to Lucy's departure had come wholly from herself, and that at the present time all the ladies at Fawn Court — of course in the absence of Lord Fawn — were quite disposed to forgive Lucy if Lucy would only be forgiven, and hide herself when Lord Fawn should come; had Frank known all this, he might, perhaps, have counselled her to remain at Richmond. But he believed that Lady Fawn had insisted on Lucy's departure; and of course, in such a case, Lucy must depart. He showed the letter to his sister, and asked for advice.

"How very unfortunate!" said Ellinor.

"Yes; is it not?"

"I wonder what she said to Lord Fawn?"

"She would speak out very plainly."

"I suppose she has spoken out plainly, or otherwise they would never have told her to go away. It seems so unlike what I have always heard of Lady Fawn."

"Lucy can be very headstrong if she pleases," said Lucy's lover. "What on earth had I better do for her? I don't suppose she can get another place that would suit."

"If she is to be your wife I don't think she should go into another place. If it is quite fixed," she said, and then she looked into her brother's face.

"Well; what then?"

"If you are sure you mean it ——"

"Of course I mean it."

"Then she had better come here. As for her going out as a governess, and telling the people that she is to be your wife in a few months, that is out of the question. And it would, I think, be equally so that she should go into any house and not tell the truth. Of course this would be the place for her." It was at last decided that Ellinor should discuss the matter with her mother.

When the whole matter was unfolded to Mrs. Greystock that lady was more troubled than ever. If Lucy were to come to the deanery, she must come as Frank's affianced bride, and must be treated as such by all Bobsborough. The dean would be giving his express sanction to the marriage, and so would Mrs. Greystock herself. She knew well that she had no power of refusing her sanction. Frank must do as he pleased about marrying. Were Lucy once his wife, of course she would be made welcome to the best the deanery could give her. There was no doubt about Lucy being as good as gold; only that real gold, vile as it is, was the one thing that Frank so much needed. The mother thought that she had discovered in her son something which seemed to indicate a possibility that this very imprudent match might at last be abandoned; and if there were such possibility, surely Lucy ought not now to be brought to the deanery. Nevertheless, if Frank were to insist upon her coming, she must come.

But Mrs. Greystock had a plan. "Oh, mamma," said Ellinor, when the plan was proposed to her, "do not you think that would be cruel?"

"Cruel, my dear! no; certainly not cruel."

"She is such a virago."

"You think that because Lizzie Eustace has said so. I don't know that she 's a virago at all. I believe her to be a very good sort of woman."

"Do you remember, mamma, what the admiral used to say of her?"

"The admiral, my dear, tried to borrow her money, as he did everybody's, and when she would n't give him any, then he said severe things. The poor admiral was never to be trusted in such matters."

"I don't think Frank would like it," said Ellinor. The plan was this. Lady Linlithgow, who, through her brother-in-law, the late Admiral Greystock, was connected with the dean's family, had made known her desire to have a new companion for six months. The lady was to be treated like a lady, but was to have no salary. Her travelling expenses were to be paid for her and no duties were to be expected from her, except that of talking and listening to the countess.

"I really think it 's the very thing for her," said Mrs. Greystock. "It 's not like being a governess. She 's not to have any salary."

"I don't know whether that makes it better, mamma."

"It would just be a visit to Lady Linlithgow. It is that which makes the difference, my dear."

Ellinor felt sure that her brother would not hear of such an engagement, but he did hear of it, and, after various objections, gave a sort of sanction to it. It was not to be pressed upon Lucy if Lucy disliked it. Lady Linlithgow was to be made to understand that Lucy might leave whenever she pleased. It was to be an invitation, which Lucy might accept if she were so

minded. Lucy's position as an honourable guest was to be assured to her. It was thought better that Lady Linlithgow should not be told of Lucy's engagement unless she asked questions, or unless Lucy should choose to tell her. Every precaution was to be taken, and then Frank gave his sanction. He could understand, he said, that it might be inexpedient that Lucy should come at once to the deanery, as, were she to do so, she must remain there till her marriage, let the time be ever so long. "It might be two years," said the mother.

"Hardly so long as that," said the son.

"I don't think it would be — quite fair — to papa," said the mother. It was well that the argument was used behind the dean's back, as, had it been made in his hearing, the dean would have upset it at once. The dean was so short-sighted and imprudent that he would have professed delight at the idea of having Lucy Morris as a resident at the deanery. Frank acceded to the argument, and was ashamed of himself for acceding. Ellinor did not accede, nor did her sisters, but it was necessary that they should yield. Mrs. Greystock at once wrote to Lady Linlithgow, and Frank wrote by the same post to Lucy Morris.

"As there must be a year's delay," he wrote, "we all here think it best that your visit to us should be postponed for a while. But if you object to the Linlithgow plan, say so at once. You shall be asked to do nothing disagreeable." He found the letter very difficult to write. He knew that she ought to have been welcomed at once to Bobsborough. And he knew, too, the reason on which his mother's objection was founded. But it might be two years

before he could possibly marry Lucy Morris, or it might be three. Would it be proper that she should be desired to make the deanery her home for so long and so indefinite a time? And when an engagement was for so long, could it be well that everybody should know it, as everybody would if Lucy were to take up her residence permanently at the deanery? Some consideration, certainly, was due to his father.

And, moreover, it was absolutely necessary that he and Lizzie Eustace should understand each other as to that mutual pledge of truth which had passed between them.

In the meantime he received the following letter from Messrs. Camperdown:

62 New Square, Lincoln's Inn,
September 15, 18—.

"Dear Sir, — After what passed in our chambers the other day, we think it best to let you know that we have been instructed by the executor of the late Sir Florian Eustace to file a bill in Chancery against the widow, Lady Eustace, for the recovery of valuable diamonds. You will oblige us by making the necessary communication to her ladyship, and will perhaps tell us the names of her ladyship's solicitors.

"We are, dear sir,

"Your very obedient servants,

"Camperdown & Son.

"F. Greystock, Esq., M.P."

A few days after the receipt of this letter Frank started for Scotland.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FRANK GREYSTOCK'S SECOND VISIT TO PORTRAY.

On this occasion Frank Greystock went down to Portray Castle with the intention of staying at the house during the very short time that he would remain in Scotland. He was going there solely on his cousin's business, with no view to grouse-shooting or other pleasure, and he purposed remaining but a very short time — perhaps only one night. His cousin, moreover, had spoken of having guests with her, in which case there could be no tinge of impropriety in his doing so. And whether she had guests, or whether she had not, what difference could it really make? Mr. Andrew Gowran had already seen what there was to see, and could do all the evil that could be done. He could, if he were so minded, spread reports in the neighbourhood, and might, perhaps, have the power of communicating what he had discovered to the Eustace faction, John Eustace, Mr. Camperdown, and Lord Fawn. That evil, if it were an evil, must be encountered with absolute indifference. So he went direct to the castle, and was received quietly, but very graciously, by his cousin Lizzie.

There were no guests then staying at Portray; but that very distinguished lady, Mrs. Carbuncle, with her niece, Miss Roanoke, had been there; as had also that very well-known nobleman, Lord George de Bruce Car-

ruthers. Lord George and Mrs. Carbuncle were in the habit of seeing a good deal of each other, though, as all the world knew, there was nothing between them but the simplest friendship. And Sir Griffin Tewett had also been there, a young baronet who was supposed to be enamoured of that most gorgeous of beauties, Lucinda Roanoke. Of all these grand friends — friends with whom Lizzie had become acquainted in London — nothing further need be said here, as they were not at the castle when Frank arrived. When he came, whether by premeditated plan or by the chance of circumstances, Lizzie had no one with her at Portray except the faithful Macnulty.

"I thought to have found you with all the world here," said Frank, the faithful Macnulty being then present.

"Well, we have had people, but only for a couple of days. They are all coming again, but not till November. You hunt, don't you, Frank?"

"I have no time for hunting. Why do you ask?"

"I 'm going to hunt. It 's a long way to go — ten or twelve miles generally; but almost everybody hunts here. Mrs. Carbuncle is coming again, and she is about the best lady in England after hounds; so they tell me. And Lord George is coming again."

"Who is Lord George?"

"You remember Lord George Carruthers, whom we all knew in London?"

"What, the tall man with the hollow eyes and the big whiskers, whose life is a mystery to every one? Is he coming?"

"I like him just because he is n't a ditto to every man one meets. And Sir Griffin Tewett is coming."

"Who is a ditto to everybody."

"Well, yes; poor Sir Griffin! The truth is, he is awfully smitten with Mrs. Carbuncle's niece."

"Don't you go match-making, Lizzie," said Frank. "That Sir Griffin is a fool, we will all allow; but it 's my belief he has wit enough to make himself pass off as a man of fortune, with very little to back it. He 's at law with his mother, at law with his sisters, and at law with his younger brother."

"If he were at law with his great-grandmother, it would be nothing to me, Frank. She has her aunt to take care of her, and Sir Griffin is coming with Lord George."

"You don't mean to put up all their horses, Lizzie?"

"Well, not all. Lord George and Sir Griffin are to keep theirs at Troon, or Kilmarnock, or somewhere. The ladies will bring two apiece, and I shall have two of my own."

"And carriage horses and hacks?"

"The carriage horses are here, of course."

"It will cost you a great deal of money, Lizzie."

"That 's just what I tell her," said Miss Macnulty.

"I 've been living here, not spending one shilling, for the last two months," said Lizzie, "and all for the sake of economy; yet people think that no woman was ever left so rich. Surely I can afford to see a few friends for one month in the year. If I can't afford so much as that, I shall let the place and go and live abroad somewhere. It 's too much to suppose that a woman should shut herself up here for six or eight months and see nobody all the time."

On that, the day of Frank's arrival, not a word was said about the necklace, nor of Lord Fawn, nor of that

mutual pledge which had been taken and given, down among the rocks. Frank, before dinner, went out about the place that he might see how things were going on, and observe whether the widow was being ill-treated and unfairly eaten up by her dependants. He was, too, a little curious as to a matter as to which his curiosity was soon relieved. He had hardly reached the out-buildings which lay behind the kitchen gardens on his way to the Portray woods, before he encountered Andy Gowran. That faithful adherent of the family raised his hand to his cap and bobbed his head, and then silently, and with renewed diligence, applied himself to the job which he had in hand. The gate of the little yard in which the cow-shed stood was off its hinges, and Andy was resetting the post and making the fence tight and tidy. Frank stood a moment watching him, and then asked after his health. "'Deed am I nae that to boost about in the way of bodily heelth, Muster Greystock. I 've just o'er mony things to tent to, to tent to my ain sell as a prudent mon ought. It 's airly an' late wi' me, Muster Greystock ; and the lumbagy just a' o'er a mon is n't the pleasantest freend in the warld." Frank said that he was sorry to hear so bad an account of Mr. Gowran's health, and passed on. It was not for him to refer to the little scene in which Mr. Gowran had behaved so badly and had shaken his head. If the misbehaviour had been condoned by Lady Eustace, the less that he said about it, the better. Then he went on through the woods, and was well aware that Mr. Gowran's fostering care had not been abated by his disapproval of his mistress. The fences had been repaired since Frank was there, and stones had been laid on the road or track over which was to be carried away the

underwood which it would be Lady Eustace's privilege to cut during the coming winter.

Frank was not alone for one moment with his cousin during that evening, but in the presence of Miss Macnulty all the circumstances of the necklace were discussed. "Of course it is my own," said Lady Eustace, standing up, "my own to do just what I please with. If they go on like this with me, they will almost tempt me to sell it for what it will fetch, just to prove to them that I can do so. I have half a mind to sell it and then send them the money and tell them to put it by for my little Flory. Would not that serve them right, Frank?"

"I don't think I'd do that, Lizzie."

"Why not? You always tell me what not to do, but you never say what I ought!"

"That is because I am so wise and prudent. If you were to attempt to sell the diamonds they would stop you, and would not give you credit for the generous purpose afterward."

"They would n't stop you if you sold the ring you wear." The ring had been given to him by Lucy after their engagement, and was the only present she had ever made him. It had been purchased out of her own earnings, and had been put on his finger by her own hand. Either from accident or craft he had not worn it when he had been before at Portray, and Lizzie had at once observed it as a thing she had never seen before. She knew well that he would not buy such a ring. Who had given him the ring? Frank almost blushed as he looked down at the trinket, and Lizzie was sure that it had been given by that sly little creeping thing, Lucy. "Let me look at the ring," she

said. "Nobody could stop you if you chose to sell this to me."

"Little things are always less troublesome than big things," he said.

"What is the price?" she asked.

"It is not in the market, Lizzie. Nor should your diamonds be there. You must be content to let them take what legal steps they may think fit, and defend your property. After that you can do as you please; but keep them safe till the thing is settled. If I were you I would have them at the bankers."

"Yes; and then when I asked for them be told that they could n't be given up to me because of Mr. Camperdown or the Lord Chancellor. And what 's the good of a thing locked up? You wear your ring; why should n't I wear my necklace?"

"I have nothing to say against it."

"It is n't that I care for such things. Do I, Julia?"

"All ladies like them, I suppose," said that stupidest and most stubborn of all humble friends, Miss Macnulty.

"I don't like them at all, and you know I don't. I hate them. They have been the misery of my life. Oh, how they have tormented me! Even when I am asleep I dream about them, and think that people steal them. They have never given me one moment's happiness. When I have them on I am always fearing that Camperdown and son are behind me and are going to clutch them. And I think too well of myself to believe that anybody will care more for me because of a necklace. The only good they have ever done me has been to save me from a man who I now know

never cared for me. But they are mine; and therefore I choose to keep them. Though I am only a woman, I have an idea of my own rights, and will defend them as far as they go. If you say I ought not to sell them, Frank, I 'll keep them; but I 'll wear them as commonly as you do that *gage d'amour* which you carry on your finger. Nobody shall ever see me without them. I won't go to any old dowager's tea-party without them. Mr. John Eustace has chosen to accuse me of stealing them."

"I don't think John Eustace has ever said a word about them," said Frank.

"Mr. Camperdown, then; the people who choose to call themselves the guardians and protectors of my boy, as if I were not his best guardian and protector. I 'll show them at any rate that I 'm not ashamed of my booty. I don't see why I should lock them up in a musty old bank. Why don't you send your ring to the bank?"

Frank could not but feel that she did it all very well. In the first place, she was very pretty in the display of her half-mock indignation. Though she used some strong words, she used them with an air that carried them off and left no impression that she had been either vulgar or violent. And then, though the indignation was half mock, it was also half real, and her courage and spirit were attractive. Greystock had at last taught himself to think that Mr. Camperdown was not justified in the claim which he made, and that in consequence of that unjust claim Lizzie Eustace had been subjected to ill-usage. "Did you ever see this bone of contention," she asked; "this fair Helen for which Greeks and Romans are to fight?"

"I never saw the necklace, if you mean that."

"I 'll fetch it. You ought to see it as you have to talk about it so often."

"Can I get it?" asked Miss Macnulty.

"Heaven and earth! To suppose that I should ever keep them under less than seven keys, and that there should be any of the locks that anybody should be able to open except myself!"

"And where are the seven keys?" asked Frank.

"Next to my heart," said Lizzie, putting her hand on her left side. "And when I sleep they are always tied round my neck in a bag, and the bag never escapes from my grasp. And I have such a knife under my pillow, ready for Mr. Camperdown should he come to seize them!" Then she ran out of the room, and in a couple of minutes returned with the necklace hanging loose in her hand. It was part of her little play to show by her speed that the close locking of the jewels was a joke, and that the ornament, precious as it was, received at her hands no other treatment than might any indifferent feminine bauble. Nevertheless within those two minutes she had contrived to unlock the heavy iron case which always stood beneath the foot of her bed. "There," she said, chucking the necklace across the table to Frank, so that he was barely able to catch it. "There is ten thousand pounds' worth, as they tell me. Perhaps you will not believe me when I say that I should have the greatest satisfaction in the world in throwing them out among those blue waves yonder, did I not think that Camperdown and son would fish them up again."

Frank spread the necklace on the table and stood up to look at it, while Miss Macnulty came and gazed

at the jewels over his shoulder. "And that is worth ten thousand pounds," said he.

"So people say."

"And your husband gave it you just as another man gives a trinket that costs ten shillings!"

"Just as Lucy Morris gave you that ring."

He smiled, but took no other notice of the accusation. "I am so poor a man," said he, "that this string of stones, which you throw about the room like a child's toy, would be the making of me."

"Take it and be made," said Lizzie.

"It seems an awful thing to me to have so much value in my hands," said Miss Macnulty, who had lifted the necklace off the table. "It would buy an estate; would n't it?"

"It would buy the honourable estate of matrimony if it belonged to many women," said Lizzie, "but it has n't had just that effect with me; has it, Frank?"

"You have n't used it with that view yet."

"Will you have it, Frank?" she said. "Take it with all its encumbrances, and weight of cares. Take it with all the burden of Messrs. Camperdown's law-suits upon it. You shall be as welcome to it as flowers were ever welcomed in May."

"The encumbrances are too heavy," said Frank.

"You prefer a little ring."

"Very much."

"I don't doubt but you 're right," said Lizzie. "Who fears to rise will hardly get a fall. But there they are for you to look at, and there they shall remain for the rest of the evening." So saying, she clasped the string round Miss Macnulty's throat. "How do you feel, Julia, with an estate upon your neck? Five

hundred acres at a pound an acre. That 's about it." Miss Macnulty looked as though she did not like it, but she stood for a time bearing the precious burden, while Frank explained to his cousin that she could hardly buy land to pay her five per cent. They were then taken off and left lying on the table till Lady Eustace took them with her as she went to bed. "I do feel so like some naughty person in the 'Arabian Nights,'" she said, "who has got some great treasure that always brings him into trouble; but he can't get rid of it, because some spirit has given it to him. At last some morning it turns to slate stones, and then he has to be a water-carrier, and is happy ever afterwards, and marries the king's daughter. What sort of a king's son will there be for me when this turns into slate stones? Good night, Frank." Then she went off with her diamonds and her bed-candle.

On the following day Frank suggested that there should be a business conversation. "That means that I am to sit silent and obedient while you lecture me," she said. But she submitted, and they went together into the little sitting-room which looked out over the sea, the room where she kept her Shelley and her Byron, and practised her music and did water-colours, and sat, sometimes, dreaming of a Corsair. "And now, my gravest of Mentors, what must a poor ignorant female Telemachus do, so that the world may not trample on her too heavily?" He began by telling her what had happened between himself and Lord Fawn, and recommended her to write to that unhappy nobleman, returning any present that she might have received from him, and expressing, with some mild but intelligible sarcasm, her regret that their paths should

have crossed each other. "I 've worse in store for his lordship than that," said Lizzie.

"Do you mean by any personal interview?"

"Certainly."

"I think you are wrong, Lizzie."

"Of course you do. Men have become so soft themselves, that they no longer dare to think even of punishing those who behave badly, and they expect women to be softer and more fainéant than themselves. I have been ill-used."

"Certainly you have."

"And I will be revenged. Look here, Frank; if your view of these things is altogether different from mine, let us drop the subject. Of all living human beings you are the one that is most to me now. Perhaps you are more than any other ever was. But, even for you, I cannot alter my nature. Even for you I would not alter it if I could. That man has injured me, and all the world knows it. I will have my revenge, and all the world shall know that. I did wrong; I am sensible enough of that."

"What wrong do you mean?"

"I told a man whom I never loved that I would marry him. God knows that I have been punished."

"Perhaps, Lizzie, it is better as it is."

"A great deal better. I will tell you now that I could never have induced myself to go into church with that man as his bride. With a man I did n't love I might have done so, but not with a man I despised."

"You have been saved, then, from a greater evil."

"Yes; but not the less is his injury to me. It is not because he despises me that he rejects me; nor is it

because he thought that I had taken property that was not my own."

"Why then?"

"Because he was afraid the world would say that I had done so. Poor shallow creature! But he shall be punished."

"I do not know how you can punish him."

"Leave that to me. I have another thing to do much more difficult." She paused, looking for a moment up into his face, and then turning her eyes upon the ground. As he said nothing, she went on. "I have to excuse myself to you for having accepted him."

"I have never blamed you."

"Not in words. How should you? But if you have not blamed me in your heart, I despise you. I know you have. I have seen it in your eyes when you have counselled me either to take the poor creature or to leave him. Speak out, now, like a man. Is it not so?"

"I never thought you loved him."

"Loved him! Is there anything in him or about him that a woman could love? Is he not a poor social stick; a bit of half-dead wood, good to make a post of if one wants a post? I did want a post so sorely then!"

"I don't see why?"

"You don't?"

"No, indeed. It was natural that you should be inclined to marry again."

"Natural that I should be inclined to marry again! And is that all? It is hard sometimes to see whether men are thick-witted, or hypocrites so perfect that they seem to be so. I cannot bring myself to think you thick-witted, Frank."

"Then I must be the perfect hypocrite, of course."

"You believed I accepted Lord Fawn because it was natural that I should wish to marry again! Frank, you believed nothing of the kind. I accepted him in my anger, in my misery, in my despair, because I had expected you to come to me, and you had not come." She had thrown herself now into a chair, and sat looking at him. "You had told me that you would come, and you had stayed away. It was you, Frank, that I wanted to punish then; but there was no punishment in it for you. When is it to be, Frank?"

"When is what to be?" he asked, in a low voice, all but dumbfounded. How was he to put an end to this conversation, and what was he to say to her?

"Your marriage with that little wizened thing who gave you the ring, that prim morsel of feminine propriety who has been clever enough to make you believe that her morality would suffice to make you happy."

"I will not hear Lucy Morris abused, Lizzie."

"Is that abuse? Is it abuse to say that she is moral and proper? But, sir, I shall abuse her. I know her for what she is, while your eyes are sealed. She is wise and moral, and decorous and prim; but she is a hypocrite, and has no touch of real heart in her composition. Not abuse her when she has robbed me of all, all, all that I have in the world! Go to her. You had better go at once. I did not mean to say all this, but it has been said, and you must leave me. I, at any rate, cannot play the hypocrite. I wish I could." He rose and came to her, and attempted to take her hand, but she flung away from him. "No," she said, "never again; never, unless you will tell me that the promise you made me when we were down on the seashore

was a true promise. Was that truth, sir, or was it a — lie?"

"Lizzie, do not use such a word as that to me."

"I cannot stand picking my words when the whole world is going round with me, and my very brain is on fire. What is it to me what my words are? Say one syllable to me, and every word I utter again while breath is mine shall be spoken to do you pleasure. If you cannot say it, it is nothing to me what you or any one may think of my words. You know my secret, and I care not who else knows it. At any rate, I can die." Then she paused a moment, and after that stalked steadily out of the room.

That afternoon Frank took a long walk by himself over the mountains, nearly to the cottage and back again; and on his return was informed that Lady Eustace was ill, and had gone to bed. At any rate, she was too unwell to come down to dinner. He, therefore, and Miss Macnulty sat down to dine, and passed the evening together without other companionship. Frank had resolved during his walk that he would leave Portray the next day; but had hardly resolved upon anything else. One thing, however, seemed certain to him. He was engaged to marry Lucy Morris, and to that engagement he must be true. His cousin was very charming, and had never looked so lovely in his eyes as when she had been confessing her love for him. And he had wondered at and admired her courage, her power of language, and her force. He could not quite forget how useful would be her income to him. And, added to this, there was present to him an unwholesome feeling, ideas absolutely at variance with those better ideas which had prompted him when he

was writing his offer to Lucy Morris in his chambers, that a woman such as was his cousin Lizzie was fitter to be the wife of a man thrown, as he must be, into the world, than a dear, quiet, domestic little girl, such as Lucy Morris. But to Lucy Morris he was engaged, and therefore there was an end of it.

The next morning he sent his love to his cousin, asking whether he should see her before he went. It was still necessary that he should know what attorneys to employ on her behalf if the threatened bill were filed by Messrs. Camperdown. Then he suggested a firm in his note. Might he put the case into the hands of Mr. Townsend, who was a friend of his own? There came back to him a scrap of paper, an old envelope, on which were written the names of Mowbray and Mopus: Mowbray and Mopus in a large scrawling hand, and with pencil. He put the scrap of paper into his pocket, feeling that he could not remonstrate with her at this moment, and was prepared to depart, when there came a message to him. Lady Eustace was still unwell, but had risen; and if it were not giving him too much trouble, would see him before he went. He followed the messenger to the same little room, looking out upon the sea, and then found her, dressed indeed, but with a white morning wrapper on, and with hair loose over her shoulders. Her eyes were red with weeping, and her face was pale, and thin, and woebegone. "I am so sorry that you are ill, Lizzie," he said.

"Yes, I am ill; sometimes very ill; but what does it matter? I did not send for you, Frank, to speak of aught so trivial as that. I have a favour to ask."

"Of course I will grant it."

"It is your forgiveness for my conduct yesterday."

"Oh, Lizzie!"

"Say that you forgive me. Say it!"

"How can I forgive where there has been no fault?"

"There has been fault. Say that you forgive me." And she stamped her foot as she demanded his pardon.

"I do forgive you," he said.

"And now, one farewell." She then threw herself upon his breast and kissed him. "Now go," she said; "go, and come no more to me, unless you would see me mad. May God Almighty bless you, and make you happy." As she uttered this prayer she held the door in her hand, and there was nothing for him but to leave her.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. AND MRS. HITTAWAY IN SCOTLAND.

A GREAT many people go to Scotland in the autumn. When you have your autumn holiday in hand to dispose of it, there is nothing more aristocratic that you can do than go to Scotland. Dukes are more plentiful there than in Pall Mall, and you will meet an earl or at least a lord on every mountain. Of course, if you merely travel about from inn to inn, and neither have a moor of your own nor stay with any great friend, you don't quite enjoy the cream of it; but to go to Scotland in August and stay there, perhaps, till the end of September, is about the most certain step you can take towards autumnal fashion. Switzerland and the Tyrol, and even Italy, are all redolent of Mr. Cook, and in those beautiful lands you become subject at least to suspicion.

By no person was the duty of adhering to the best side of society more clearly appreciated than by Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway of Warwick Square. Mr. Hittaway was Chairman of the Board of Civil Appeals, and was a man who quite understood that there are chairmen and — chairmen. He could name to you three or four men holding responsible permanent official positions, quite as good as that he filled in regard to salary — which, as he often said of his own, was a mere nothing, just a poor two thousand pounds a year, not as

much as a grocer would make in a decent business — but they were simply head clerks and nothing more. Nobody knew anything of them. They had no names. You did not meet them anywhere. Cabinet ministers never heard of them; and nobody out of their own offices ever consulted them. But there are others, and Mr. Hittaway felt greatly conscious that he was one of them, who move altogether in a different sphere. One minister of State would ask another whether Hittaway had been consulted on this or on that measure — so at least the Hittawayites were in the habit of reporting. The names of Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway were constantly in the papers. They were invited to evening gatherings at the houses of both the alternate Prime Ministers. They were to be seen at fashionable gatherings up the river. They attended concerts at Buckingham Palace. Once a year they gave a dinner-party which was inserted in the "Morning Post." On such occasions at least one Cabinet Minister always graced the board. In fact, Mr. Hittaway, as Chairman of the Board of Civil Appeals, was somebody; and Mrs. Hittaway, as his wife, and as sister to a peer, was somebody also. The reader will remember that Mrs. Hittaway had been a Fawn before she married.

There is this drawback upon the happy condition which Mr. Hittaway had achieved, that it demands a certain expenditure. Let nobody dream that he can be somebody without having to pay for that honour; unless, indeed, he be a clergyman. When you go to a concert at Buckingham Palace you pay nothing, it is true, for your ticket; and a Cabinet Minister dining with you does not eat or drink more than your old friend Jones the attorney. But in some insidious, un-

foreseen manner, in a way that can only be understood after much experience, these luxuries of fashion do make a heavy pull on a modest income. Mrs. Hittaway knew this thoroughly, having much experience, and did make her fight bravely. For Mr. Hittaway's income was no more than modest. A few thousand pounds he had of his own when he married, and his Clara had brought to him the unpretending sum of fifteen hundred. But, beyond that, the poor official salary — which was less than what a decent grocer would make — was their all. The house in Warwick Square they had prudently purchased on their marriage — when houses in Warwick Square were cheaper than they are now — and there they carried on their battle, certainly with success. But two thousand a year does not go very far in Warwick Square, even though you sit rent free, if you have a family and absolutely must keep a carriage. It therefore resulted that when Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway went to Scotland, which they would endeavour to do every year, it was very important that they should accomplish their aristocratic holiday as visitors at the house of some aristocratic friend. So well had they played their cards in this respect that they seldom failed altogether. In one year they had been the guests of a great marquis quite in the north, and that had been a very glorious year. To talk of Stackallan was indeed a thing of beauty. But in that year Mr. Hittaway had made himself very useful in London. Since that they had been at delicious shooting lodges in Ross and Inverness-shire, had visited a millionaire at his palace amid the Argyle mountains, had been fêted in a western island, had been bored by a Dundee dowager, and put up with a Lothian laird.

But the thing had been almost always done, and the Hittaways were known as people that went to Scotland. He could handle a gun, and was clever enough never to shoot a keeper. She could read aloud, could act a little, could talk or hold her tongue; and let her hosts be who they would, and as mighty as you please, never caused them trouble by seeming to be out of their circle, and on that account requiring peculiar attention.

On this occasion Mr. and Mrs. Hittaway were the guests of old Lady Pierrepoint in Dumfries. There was nothing special to recommend Lady Pierrepoint except that she had a large house and a good income, and that she liked to have people with her of whom everybody knew something. So far was Lady Pierrepoint from being high in the Hittaway world, that Mrs. Hittaway felt herself called upon to explain to her friends that she was forced to go to Dumdum House by the duties of old friendship. Dear old Lady Pierrepoint had been insisting on it for the last ten years. And there was this advantage, that Dumfriesshire is next to Ayrshire, that Dumdum was not very far — some twenty or thirty miles — from Portray, and that she might learn something about Lizzie Eustace in her country house.

It was nearly the end of August when the Hittaways left London to stay an entire month with Lady Pierrepoint. Mr. Hittaway had very frequently explained his defalcation as to fashion — in that he was remaining in London for three weeks after Parliament had broken up — by the peculiar exigencies of the Board of Appeals in that year. To one or two very intimate friends Mrs. Hittaway had hinted that everything must

be made to give way to this horrid business of Fawn's marriage. "Whatever happens, and at whatever cost, that must be stopped," she had ventured to say to Lady Glencora Palliser, who, however, could hardly be called one of her very intimate friends.

"I don't see it at all," said Lady Glencora. "I think Lady Eustace is very nice. And why should n't she marry Lord Fawn if she 's engaged to him?"

"But you have heard of the necklace, Lady Glencora?"

"Yes, I 've heard of it. I wish anybody would come to me and try and get my diamonds! They should hear what I would say."

Mrs. Hittaway greatly admired Lady Glencora, but not the less was she determined to persevere.

Had Lord Fawn been altogether candid and open with his family at this time, some trouble might have been saved; for he had almost altogether resolved that let the consequences be what they might, he would not marry Lizzie Eustace. But he was afraid to say this even to his own sister. He had promised to marry the woman, and he must walk very warily or the objurgations of the world would be too many for him. "It must depend altogether on her conduct, Clara," he had said when last his sister had persecuted him on the subject. She was not, however, sorry to have an opportunity of learning something of the lady's doings. Mr. Hittaway had more than once called on Mr. Camperdown.

"Yes," Mr. Camperdown had said in answer to a question from Lord Fawn's brother-in-law, "she would play old gooseberry with the property if we had n't some one to look after it. There 's a fellow named

Gowran who has lived there all his life, and we depend very much upon him."

It is certainly true that as to many points of conduct women are less nice than men. Mr. Hittaway would not probably have condescended himself to employ espionage, but Mrs. Hittaway was less scrupulous. She actually went down to Troon and had an interview with Mr. Gowran, using freely the names of Mr. Camperdown and Lord Fawn; and some ten days afterward Mr. Gowran travelled as far as Dumfries and Dumdum, and had an interview with Mrs. Hittaway. The result of all this, and of further inquiries, will be shown by the following letter from Mrs. Hittaway to her sister Amelia:

DUMDUM, September 9, 18—

"MY DEAR AMELIA: Here we are, and here we have to remain to the end of the month. Of course it suits, and all that; but it is awfully dull. Richmond for this time of the year is a paradise to it; and as for coming to Scotland every autumn, I am sick of it. Only what is one to do if one lives in London? If it wasn't for Orlando and the children I 'd brazen it out, and let people say what they pleased. As for health, I 'm never so well as at home, and I do like having my own things about me. Orlando has literally nothing to do here. There is no shooting except pheasants, and that doesn't begin till October.

"But I 'm very glad I 've come as to Frederic, and the more so, as I have learned the truth as to that Mr. Greystock. She, Lady Eustace, is a bad creature in every way. She still pretends that she is engaged to Frederic, and tells everybody that the marriage is not

broken off, and yet she has her cousin with her, making love to him in the most indecent way. People used to say in her favour that at any rate she never flirted. I never quite know what people mean when they talk of flirting. But you may take my word for it that she allows her cousin to embrace her, and *embraces him.* I would not say it if I could not prove it. It is horrible to think of it, when one remembers that she is almost justified in saying that Frederic is engaged to her.

"No doubt he was engaged to her. It was a great misfortune, but, thank God, is not yet past remedy. He has some foolish feeling of what he calls honour; as if a man can be bound in honour to marry a woman who has deceived him in every point! She still sticks to the diamonds, if she has not sold them, as I believe she has; and Mr. Camperdown is going to bring an action against her in the High Court of Chancery. But still Frederic will not absolutely declare the thing off. I feel, therefore, that it is my duty, to let him know what I have learned. I should be the last to stir in such a matter unless I was sure I could prove it. But I don't quite like to write to Frederic. Will mamma see him, and tell him what I say? Of course you will show this letter to mamma. If not, I must postpone it till I am in town; but I think it would come better from mamma. Mamma may be sure that she is a bad woman.

"And now what do you think of your Mr. Greystock? As sure as I am here he was seen with his arm round his cousin's waist, sitting out of doors, *kissing her.* I was never taken in by that story of his marrying Lucy Morris. He is the last man in the world to marry a governess. He is over head and ears in debt, and if

he marries at all, he must marry some one with money. I really think that mamma and you, and all of you have been soft about that girl. I believe she has been a good governess, that is, good after mamma's easy fashion; and I don't for a moment suppose that she is doing anything underhand. But a governess with a lover never does suit, and I 'm sure it won't suit in this case. If I were you I would tell her. I think it would be the best charity. Whether they mean to marry I can't tell; Mr. Greystock, that is, and this woman; *but they ought to mean it;* that 's all.

"Let me know at once whether mamma will see Frederic, and speak to him openly. She is quite at liberty to use my name; only nobody but mamma should see this letter.

"Love to them all.

"Your most affectionate sister,

"CLARA HITTAWAY."

In writing to Amelia instead of to her mother, Mrs. Hittaway was sure that she was communicating her ideas to at least two persons at Fawn Court, and that therefore there would be discussion. Had she written to her mother, her mother might probably have held her peace, and done nothing.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IT WON'T BE TRUE.

Mrs. Greystock, in making her proposition respecting Lady Linlithgow, wrote to Lady Fawn, and by the same post Frank wrote to Lucy. But before those letters reached Fawn Court there had come that other dreadful letter from Mrs. Hittaway. The consternation caused at Fawn Court in respect to Mr. Greystock's treachery almost robbed of its importance the suggestion made as to Lord Fawn. Could it be possible that this man, who had so openly and in so manly a manner engaged himself to Lucy Morris, should now be proposing to himself a marriage with his rich cousin? Lady Fawn did not believe that it was possible. Clara had not seen those horrid things with her own eyes, and other people might be liars. But Amelia shook her head. Amelia evidently believed that all manner of iniquities were possible to man.

"You see, mamma, the sacrifice he was making was so very great!"

"But he made it!" pleaded Lady Fawn.

"No, mamma, he said he would make it. Men do these things. It is very horrid, but I think they do them more now than they used to. It seems to me that nobody cares now what he does, if he 's not to be put into prison." It was resolved between these two wise ones that nothing at the present should be said to Lucy or to any one of the family. They would wait

awhile, and in the meantime they attempted, as far as it was possible to make the attempt without express words, to let Lucy understand that she might remain at Fawn Court if she pleased. While this was going on, Lord Fawn did come down once again, and on that occasion Lucy simply absented herself from the dinner-table and from the family circle for that evening.

"He 's coming in, and you 've got to go to prison again," Nina said to her, with a kiss.

The matter to which Mrs. Hittaway's letter more specially alluded was debated between the mother and daughter at great length. They, indeed, were less brave and less energetic than was the married daughter of the family; but as they saw Lord Fawn more frequently, they knew better than Mrs. Hittaway the real state of the case. They felt sure that he was already sufficiently embittered against Lady Eustace, and thought that therefore the peculiarly unpleasant task assigned to Lady Fawn need not be performed. Lady Fawn had not the advantage of living so much in the world as her daughter, and was oppressed by, perhaps, a squeamish delicacy.

"I really could not tell him about her sitting and — and kissing the man. Could I, my dear?"

"I could n't," said Amelia; "but Clara would."

"And to tell the truth," continued Lady Fawn, "I should n't care a bit about it if it was not for poor Lucy. What will become of her if that man is untrue to her?"

"Nothing on earth would make her believe it, unless it came from himself," said Amelia, who really did know something of Lucy's character. "Till he tells her, or till she knows that he 's married, she 'll never believe it."

Then, after a few days, there came those other letters from Bobsborough, one from the dean's wife and the other from Frank. The matter there proposed it was necessary that they should discuss with Lucy, as the suggestion had reached Lucy as well as themselves. She at once came to Lady Fawn with her lover's letter, and with a gentle merry laughing face declared that the thing would do very well. "I am sure I should get on with her, and I should know that it would n't be for long," said Lucy.

"The truth is, we don't want you to go at all," said Lady Fawn.

"Oh, but I must," said Lucy in her sharp, decided tone. "I must go. I was bound to wait till I heard from Mr. Greystock, because it is my first duty to obey him. But of course I can't stay here after what has passed. As Nina says, it is simply going to prison when Lord Fawn comes here."

"Nina is an impertinent little chit," said Amelia.

"She is the dearest little friend in all the world," said Lucy, "and always tells the exact truth. I do go to prison, and when he comes I feel that I ought to go to prison. Of course I must go away. What does it matter? Lady Linlithgow won't be exactly like you," and she put her little hand upon Lady Fawn's fat arm caressingly, "and I sha'n't have you all to spoil me; but I shall be simply waiting till he comes. Everything now must be no more than waiting till he comes."

If it was to be that the he would never come — this was very dreadful. Amelia clearly thought that "he" would never come, and Lady Fawn was apt to think her daughter wiser than herself. And if Mr. Grey-

stock were such as Mrs. Hittaway had described him to be — if there were to be no such coming as that for which Lucy fondly waited — then there would be reason tenfold strong why she should not leave Fawn Court and go to Lady Linlithgow. In such case, when that blow should fall, Lucy would require very different treatment than might be expected for her from the hands of Lady Linlithgow. She would fade and fall to the earth like a flower with an insect at its root. She would be like a wounded branch into which no sap would run. With such misfortune and wretchedness possibly before her, Lady Fawn could not endure the idea that Lucy should be turned out to encounter it all beneath the cold shade of Lady Linlithgow's indifference. "My dear," she said, "let bygones be bygones. Come down and meet Lord Fawn. Nobody will say anything. After all, you were provoked very much, and there has been quite enough about it."

This, from Lady Fawn, was almost miraculous — from Lady Fawn, to whom her son had ever been the highest of human beings! But Lucy had told the tale to her lover, and her lover approved of her going. Perhaps there was acting upon her mind some feeling, of which she was hardly conscious, that as long as she remained at Fawn Court she would not see her lover. She had told him that she could make herself supremely happy in the simple knowledge that he loved her. But we all know how few such declarations should be taken as true. Of course she was longing to see him. "If he would only pass by the road," she would say to herself, "so that I might peep at him through the gate!" She had no formed idea in her own mind that she would be able to see him should

she go to Lady Linlithgow, but still there would be the chances of her altered life! She would tell Lady Linlithgow the truth, and why should Lady Linlithgow refuse her so rational a pleasure? There was, of course, a reason why Frank should not come to Fawn Court; but the house in Bruton street need not be closed to him. "I hardly know how to love you enough," she said to Lady Fawn, "but indeed I must go. I do so hope the time may come when you and Mr. Greystock may be friends. Of course it will come. Shall it not?"

"Who can look into the future?" said the wise Amelia.

"Of course if he is your husband we shall love him," said the less wise Lady Fawn.

"He is to be my husband," said Lucy, springing up. "What do you mean? Do you mean anything?" Lady Fawn, who was not at all wise, protested that she meant nothing.

What were they to do? On that special day they merely stipulated that there should be a day's delay before Lady Fawn answered Mrs. Greystock's letter, so that she might sleep upon it. The sleeping on it meant that further discussion which was to take place between Lady Fawn and her second daughter in her ladyship's bedroom that night. During all this period the general discomfort of Fawn Court was increased by a certain sullenness on the part of Augusta, the elder daughter, who knew that letters had come and that consultations were being held, but who was not admitted to those consultations. Since the day on which poor Augusta had been handed over to Lizzie Eustace as her peculiar friend in the family, there had always existed a feeling that she by her position was

debarred from sympathising in the general desire to be quit of Lizzie; and then, too, poor Augusta was never thoroughly trusted by that great guide of the family, Mrs. Hittaway. "She could n't keep it to herself if you 'd give her gold to do it," Mrs. Hittaway would say. Consequently Augusta was sullen and conscious of ill-usage.

"Have you fixed upon anything?" she said to Lucy that evening.

"Not quite; only I am to go away."

"I don't see why you should go away at all. Frederic does n't come here so very often, and when he does come he does n't say much to any one. I suppose it 's all Amelia's doings."

"Nobody wants me to go, only I feel that I ought. Mr. Greystock thinks it best."

"I suppose he 's going to quarrel with us all."

"No, dear. I don't think he wants to quarrel with any one; but above all he must not quarrel with me. Lord Fawn has quarrelled with him, and that 's a misfortune — just for the present."

"And where are you going?"

"Nothing has been settled yet; but we are talking of Lady Linlithgow — if she will take me."

"Lady Linlithgow! Oh dear!"

"Won't it do?"

"They say she 's the most dreadful old woman in London. Lady Eustace told such stories about her."

"Do you know, I think I shall rather like it."

But things were very different with Lucy the next morning. That discussion in Lady Fawn's room was protracted till midnight, and then it was decided that just a word should be said to Lucy, so that, if possible,

she might be induced to remain at Fawn Court. Lady Fawn was to say the word, and on the following morning she was closeted with Lucy.

"My dear," she began, "we all want you to do us a particular favour." As she said this, she held Lucy by the hand, and no one looking at them would have thought that Lucy was a governess and that Lady Fawn was her employer.

"Dear Lady Fawn, indeed it is better that I should go."

"Stay just one month."

"I could n't do that, because then this chance of a home would be gone. Of course we can't wait a month before we let Mrs. Greystock know."

"We must write to her, of course."

"And then, you see, Mr. Greystock wishes it." Lady Fawn knew that Lucy could be very firm, and had hardly hoped that anything could be done by simple persuasion. They had long been accustomed among themselves to call her obstinate, and knew that even in her acts of obedience she had a way of obeying after her own fashion. It was as well, therefore, that the thing to be said should be said at once.

"My dear Lucy, has it ever occurred to you that there may be a slip between the cup and the lip?"

"What do you mean, Lady Fawn?"

"That sometimes engagements take place which never become more than engagements. Look at Lord Fawn and Lady Eustace."

"Mr. Greystock and I are not like that," said Lucy, proudly.

"Such things are very dreadful, Lucy, but they do happen."

"Do you mean anything — anything real, Lady Fawn?"

"I have so strong a reliance on your good sense, that I will tell you just what I do mean. A rumour has reached me that Mr. Greystock is — paying more attention than he ought to do to Lady Eustace."

"His own cousin!"

"But people marry their cousins, Lucy."

"To whom he has always been just like a brother! I do think that is the cruellest thing. Because he sacrifices his time and his money and all his holidays to go and look after her affairs, this is to be said of him! she has n't another human being to look after her, and therefore he is obliged to do it. Of course he has told me all about it. I do think, Lady Fawn, I do think that is the greatest shame I ever heard."

"But if it should be true ——"

"It is n't true."

"But just for the sake of showing you, Lucy ——; if it was to be true."

"It won't be true."

"Surely I may speak to you as your friend, Lucy. You need n't be so abrupt with me. Will you listen to me, Lucy?"

"Of course I will listen; only nothing that anybody on earth could say about that would make me believe a word of it."

"Very well! Now just let me go on. If it were to be so ——"

"Oh-h, Lady Fawn!"

"Don't be foolish, Lucy. I will say what I 've got to say. If — if —. Let me see. Where was I? I mean just this: You had better remain here till things

are a little more settled. Even if it be only a rumour — and I 'm sure I don't believe it 's anything more — you had better hear about it with us, with friends round you, than with a perfect stranger like Lady Linlithgow. If anything were to go wrong there, you would n't know where to come for comfort. If anything were wrong with you here, you could come to me as though I were your mother. Could n't you, now? "

"Indeed, indeed I could. And I will. I always will. Lady Fawn, I love you and the dear darling girls better than all the world — except Mr. Greystock. If anything like that were to happen, I think I should creep here and ask to die in your house. But it won't. And just now it will be better that I should go away."

It was found at last that Lucy must have her way, and letters were written both to Mrs. Greystock and to Frank, requesting that the suggested overtures might at once be made to Lady Linlithgow. Lucy, in her letter to her lover, was more than ordinarily cheerful and jocose. She had a good deal to say about Lady Linlithgow that was really droll, and not a word to say indicative of the slightest fear in the direction of Lady Eustace. She spoke of poor Lizzie, and declared her conviction that that marriage never could come off now. "You must n't be angry when I say that I can't break my heart for them, for I never did think that they were very much in love. As for Lord Fawn, of course he is my — ENEMY." And she wrote the word in big letters. "And as for Lizzie, she 's your cousin, and all that. And she 's ever so pretty, and all that. And she 's as rich as Crœsus, and all that. But I don't think she 'll break her own heart.

I would break mine; only — only — only —. You will understand the rest. If it should come to pass, I wonder whether 'the duchess' would ever let a poor creature see a friend of hers in Bruton street." Frank had once called Lady Linlithgow the duchess after a certain popular picture in a certain popular book, and Lucy never forgot anything that Frank had said.

It did come to pass. Mrs. Greystock at once corresponded with Lady Linlithgow, and Lady Linlithgow, who was at Ramsgate for her autumn vacation, requested that Lucy Morris might be brought to see her at her house in London on the second of October. Lady Linlithgow's autumn holiday always ended on the last day of September. On the second of October Lady Fawn herself took Lucy up to Bruton street, and Lady Linlithgow appeared. "Miss Morris," said Lady Fawn, "thinks it right that you should be told that she 's engaged to be married."

"Who to?" demanded the Countess.

Lucy was as red as fire, although she had especially made up her mind that she would not blush when the communication was made. "I don't know that she wishes me to mention the gentleman's name, just at present; but I can assure you that he is all that he ought to be."

"I hate mysteries," said the Countess.

"If Lady Linlithgow ——" began Lucy.

"Oh, it 's nothing to me," continued the old woman. "It won't come off for six months, I suppose?" Lucy gave a mute assurance that there would be no such difficulty as that. "And he can't come here, Miss Morris." To this Lucy said nothing. Perhaps she might win over even the Countess, and if not, she

must bear her six months of prolonged exclusion from the light of day. And so the matter was settled. Lucy was to be taken back to Richmond, and to come again on the following Monday.

"I don't like this parting at all, Lucy," Lady Fawn said on her way home.

"It is better so, Lady Fawn."

"I hate people going away; but, somehow, you don't feel it as we do."

"You would n't say that if you really knew what I do feel."

"There was no reason why you should go. Frederic was getting not to care for it at all. What 's Nina to do now? I can't get another governess after you. I hate all these sudden breaks up. And all for such a trumpery thing. If Frederic has n't forgotten all about it, he ought."

"It has n't come altogether from him, Lady Fawn."

"How has it come, then?"

"I suppose it is because of Mr. Greystock. I suppose when a girl has engaged herself to marry a man, she must think more of him than of anything else."

"Why could n't you think of him at Fawn Court?"

"Because — because things have been unfortunate. He is n't your friend, not as yet. Can't you understand, Lady Fawn, that, dear as you all must be to me, I must live in his friendships, and take his part when there is a part?"

"Then I suppose that you mean to hate all of us." Lucy could only cry at hearing this; whereupon Lady Fawn also burst into tears.

On the Sunday before Lucy took her departure, Lord

Fawn was again at Richmond. "Of course you 'll come down, just as if nothing had happened," said Lydia.

"We 'll see," said Lucy.

"Mamma will be very angry, if you don't," said Lydia.

But Lucy had a little plot in her head, and her appearance at the dinner-table on that Sunday must depend on the manner in which her plot was executed. After church, Lord Fawn would always hang about the grounds for a while before going into the house; and on this morning Lucy also remained outside. She soon found her opportunity, and walked straight up to him, following him on the path. "Lord Fawn," she said, "I have come to beg your pardon."

He had turned round hearing footsteps behind him, but still was startled and unready. "It does not matter at all," he said.

"It matters to me, because I behaved badly."

"What I said about Mr. Greystock was n't intended to be said to you, you know."

"Even if it was, it would make no matter. I don't mean to think of that now. I beg your pardon because I said what I ought not to have said."

"You see, Miss Morris, that as the head of this family ——"

"If I had said it to Juniper, I would have begged his pardon." Now Juniper was the gardener, and Lord Fawn did not quite like the way in which the thing was put to him. The cloud came across his brow, and he began to fear that she would again insult him. "I ought n't to accuse anybody of an untruth — not in that way; and I am very sorry for what I did, and

I beg your pardon." Then she turned as though she were going back to the house.

But he stopped her. "Miss Morris, if it will suit you to stay with my mother, I will never say a word against it."

"It is quite settled that I am to go to-morrow, Lord Fawn. Only for that I would not have troubled you again."

Then she did turn towards the house, but he recalled her. "We will shake hands, at any rate," he said, "and not part as enemies." So they shook hands, and Lucy came down and sat in his company at the dinner-table.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LADY LINLITHGOW AT HOME.

Lucy, in her letter to her lover, had distinctly asked whether she might tell Lady Linlithgow the name of her future husband, but had received no reply when she was taken to Bruton street. The parting at Richmond was very painful, and Lady Fawn had declared herself quite unable to make another journey up to London with the ungrateful runagate. Though there was no diminution of affection among the Fawns, there was a general feeling that Lucy was behaving badly. That obstinacy of hers was getting the better of her. Why should she have gone? Even Lord Fawn had expressed his desire that she should remain. And then, in the breasts of the wise ones, all faith in the Greystock engagement had nearly vanished. Another letter had come from Mrs. Hittaway, who now declared that it was already understood about Portray that Lady Eustace intended to marry her cousin. This was described as a terrible crime on the part of Lizzie, though the antagonistic crime of a remaining desire to marry Lord Fawn was still imputed to her. And, of course, the one crime heightened the other. So that words from the eloquent pen of Mrs. Hittaway failed to make dark enough the blackness of poor Lizzie's character. As for Mr. Greystock, he was simply a heartless man of the world, wishing to feather his nest. Mrs. Hittaway did not for a moment believe

that he had ever dreamed of marrying Lucy Morris. Men always have three or four little excitements of that kind going on for the amusement of their leisure hours; so, at least, said Mrs. Hittaway. "The girl had better be told at once." Such was her decision about poor Lucy.

"I can't do more than I have done," said Lady Fawn to Augusta.

"She 'll never get over it, mamma; never," said Augusta.

Nothing more was said, and Lucy was sent off in the family carriage. Lydia and Nina were sent with her, and though there was some weeping on the journey, there was also much laughing. The character of the "Duchess" was discussed very much at large, and many promises were made as to long letters. Lucy, in truth, was not unhappy. She would be nearer to Frank; and then it had been almost promised her that she should go to the deanery, after a residence of six months with Lady Linlithgow. At the deanery of course she would see Frank; and she also understood that a long visit to the deanery would be the surest prelude to that home of her own of which she was always dreaming.

"Dear me; sent you up in a carriage, has she? Why should n't you have come by the railway?"

"Lady Fawn thought the carriage best. She is so very kind."

"It 's what I call twaddle, you know. I hope you ain't afraid of going in a cab."

"Not in the least, Lady Linlithgow."

"You can't have the carriage to go about here. Indeed, I never have a pair of horses till after

Christmas. I hope you know that I'm as poor as Job."

"I did n't know."

"I am, then. You'll get nothing beyond wholesome food with me. And I'm not sure it is wholesome always. The butchers are scoundrels and the bakers are worse. What used you to do at Lady Fawn's?"

"I still did lessons with the two youngest girls."

"You won't have any lessons to do here unless you do 'em with me. You had a salary there?"

"Oh, yes."

"Fifty pounds a year, I suppose."

"I had eighty."

"Had you, indeed. Eighty pounds, and a coach to ride in!"

"I had a great deal more than that, Lady Linlithgow."

"How do you mean?"

"I had downright love and affection. They were just so many dear friends. I don't suppose any governess was ever so treated before. It was just like being at home. The more I laughed the better every one liked it."

"You won't find anything to laugh at here; at least I don't. If you want to laugh, you can laugh up-stairs or down in the parlour."

"I can do without laughing for a while."

"That 's lucky, Miss Morris. If they were all so good to you, what made you come away? They sent you away, did n't they?"

"Well, I don't know that I can explain it just all. There were a great many things together. No;

they did n't send me away. I came away because it suited."

"It was something to do with your having a lover, I suppose." To this Lucy thought it best to make no answer, and the conversation for a while was dropped.

Lucy had arrived at about half-past three, and Lady Linlithgow was then sitting in the drawing-room. After the first series of questions and answers Lucy was allowed to go up to her room, and on her return to the drawing-room found the Countess still sitting upright in her chair. She was now busy with accounts, and at first took no notice of Lucy's return. What were to be the companion's duties? What tasks in the house were to be assigned to her? What hours were to be her own; and what was to be done in those of which the Countess would demand the use? Up to the present moment nothing had been said of all this. She had simply been told that she was to be Lady Linlithgow's companion, without salary, indeed, but receiving shelter, guardianship, and bread and meat in return for her services. She took up a book from the table and sat with it for ten minutes. It was Tupper's great poem, and she attempted to read it. Lady Linlithgow sat totting up her figures, but said nothing. She had not spoken a word since Lucy's return to the room; and as the great poem did not at first fascinate the new companion — whose mind not unnaturally was somewhat disturbed — Lucy ventured upon a question. "Is there anything I can do for you, Lady Linlithgow?"

"Do you know about figures?"

"Oh, yes. I consider myself quite a ready-reckoner."

"Can you make two and two come to five on one side of the sheet and only come to three on the other?"

"I 'm afraid I can't do that and prove it afterward."

"Then you ain't worth anything to me." Having so declared, Lady Linlithgow went on with her accounts and Lucy relapsed into her great poem.

"No, my dear," said the Countess, when she had completed her work, "there is n't anything for you to do. I hope you have n't come here with that mistaken idea. There won't be any sort of work of any kind expected from you. I poke my own fires and I carve my own bit of mutton. And I have n't got a nasty little dog to be washed. And I don't care twopence about worsted work. I have a maid to darn my stockings, and because she has to work I pay her wages. I don't like being alone, so I get you to come and live with me. I breakfast at nine, and if you don't manage to be down by that time I shall be cross."

"I am always up long before that."

"There 's lunch at two, just bread and butter and cheese, and perhaps a bit of cold meat. There 's dinner at seven; and very bad it is, because they don't have any good meat in London. Down in Fifeshire the meat 's a deal better than it is here, only I never go there now. At half-past ten I go to bed. It 's a pity you 're so young, because I don't know what you 'll do about going out. Perhaps, as you ain't pretty, it won't signify."

"Not at all — I should think," said Lucy.

"Perhaps you consider yourself pretty. It 's all altered now since I was young. Girls make monsters of themselves, and I 'm told the men like it; going about with unclean, frowsy structures on their heads,

enough to make a dog sick. They used to be clean and sweet and nice, what one would like to kiss. How a man can like to kiss a face with a dirty horse's tail all whizling about it, is what I can't at all understand. I don't think they do like it, but they have to do it."

"I have n't even a pony's tail," said Lucy.

"They do like to kiss you, I dare say."

"No, they don't," ejaculated Lucy, not knowing what answer to make.

"I have n't hardly looked at you, but you did n't seem to me to be a beauty."

"You are quite right about that, Lady Linlithgow."

"I hate beauties. My niece, Lizzie Eustace, is a beauty; and I think that, of all heartless creatures in the world, she is the most heartless."

"I know Lady Eustace very well."

"Of course you do. She was a Greystock, and you know the Greystocks. And she was down staying with old Lady Fawn at Richmond. I should think old Lady Fawn had a time with her; had n't she?"

"It did n't go off very well."

"Lizzie would be too much for the Fawns, I should think. She was too much for me, I know. She 's about as bad as anybody ever was. She 's false, dishonest, heartless, cruel, irreligious, ungrateful, mean, ignorant, greedy, and vile."

"Good gracious, Lady Linlithgow!"

"She 's all that, and a great deal worse. But she is handsome. I don't know that I ever saw a prettier woman. I generally go out in a cab at three o'clock, but I sha'n't want you to go with me. I don't know what you can do. Macnulty used to walk round Grosvenor Square and think that people mistook her for a

lady of quality. You must n't go and walk round Grosvenor Square by yourself, you know. Not that I care."

"I 'm not a bit afraid of anybody," said Lucy.

"Now you know all about it. There is n't anything for you to do. There are Miss Edgeworth's novels down-stairs, and 'Pride and Prejudice' in my bedroom. I don't subscribe to Mudie's, because when I asked for 'Adam Bede,' they always sent me the 'Bandit Chief.' Perhaps you can borrow books from your friends at Richmond. I dare say Mrs. Greystock has told you that I 'm very cross."

"I have n't seen Mrs. Greystock for ever so long."

"Then Lady Fawn has told you — or somebody. When the wind is east, or northeast, or even north, I am cross, for I have the lumbago. It 's all very well talking about being good-humoured. You can't be good-humoured with the lumbago. And I have the gout sometimes in my knee. I 'm cross enough, then, and so you 'd be. And, among 'em all, I don't get much above half what I ought to have out of my jointure. That makes me very cross. My teeth are bad, and I like to have the meat tender. But it 's always tough, and that makes me cross. And when people go against the grain with me, as Lizzie Eustace always did, then I 'm very cross."

"I hope you won't be very bad with me," said Lucy.

"I don't bite, if you mean that," said her ladyship.

"I 'd sooner be bitten than barked at — sometimes," said Lucy.

"Humph!" said the old woman, and then she went back to her accounts.

Lucy had a few books of her own, and she determined to ask Frank to send her some. Books are cheap

things, and she would not mind asking him for magazines, and numbers, and perhaps for the loan of a few volumes. In the mean time she did read Tupper's poem, and "Pride and Prejudice," and one of Miss Edgeworth's novels — probably for the third time. During the first week in Bruton street she would have been comfortable enough, only that she had not received a line from Frank. That Frank was not specially good at writing letters, she had already taught herself to understand. She was inclined to believe that but few men of business do write letters willingly, but that, of all men, lawyers are the least willing to do so. How reasonable it was that a man who had to perform a great part of his daily work with a pen in his hand, should loathe a pen when not at work. To her the writing of letters was perhaps the most delightful occupation of her life, and the writing of letters to her lover was a foretaste of heaven; but then men, as she knew, are very different from women. And she knew this also, that of all her immediate duties, no duty could be clearer than that of abstaining from all jealousy, petulance, and impatient expectation of little attentions. He loved her, and had told her so, and had promised her that she should be his wife, and that ought to be enough for her. She was longing for a letter, because she was very anxious to know whether she might mention his name to Lady Linlithgow; but she would abstain from any idea of blaming him because the letter did not come.

On various occasions the Countess showed some little curiosity about the lover; and at last, after about ten days, when she found herself beginning to be intimate with her new companion, she put the question point-

blank. "I hate mysteries," she said. "Who is the young man you are to marry?"

"He is a gentleman I 've known a long time."

"That 's no answer."

"I don't want to tell his name quite yet, Lady Linlithgow."

"Why should n't you tell his name, unless it 's something improper? Is he a gentleman?"

"Yes, he is a gentleman."

"And how old?"

"Oh, I don't know; perhaps thirty-two."

"And has he any money?"

"He has his profession."

"I don't like these kind of secrets, Miss Morris. If you won't say who he is, what was the good of telling me that you were engaged at all? How is a person to believe it?"

"I don't want you to believe it."

"Highty, tighty!"

"I told you my own part of the affair, because I thought you ought to know it as I was coming into your house. But I don't see that you ought to know his part of it. As for not believing, I suppose you believed Lady Fawn?"

"Not a bit better than I believe you. People don't always tell truth because they have titles, nor yet because they 've grown old. He don't live in London, does he?"

"He generally lives in London. He is a barrister."

"Oh, oh! a barrister is he? They 're always making a heap of money, or else none at all. Which is it with him?"

"He makes something."

"As much as you could put in your eye and see none the worse." To see the old lady, as she made this suggestion, turn sharp round upon Lucy, was as good as a play. "My sister's nephew, the dean's son, is one of the best of the rising ones, I 'm told." Lucy blushed up to her hair, but the dowager's back was turned, and she did not see the blushes. "But he 's in Parliament, and they tell me he spends his money faster than he makes it. I suppose you know him?"

"Yes; I knew him at Bobsborough."

"It 's my belief that after all this fuss about Lord Fawn, he 'll marry his cousin, Lizzie Eustace. If he 's a lawyer, and as sharp as they say, I suppose he could manage her. I wish he would."

"And she so bad as you say she is!"

"She 'll be sure to get somebody, and why should n't he have her money as well as another? There never was a Greystock who did n't want money. That 's what it will come to; you 'll see."

"Never," said Lucy decidedly.

"And why not?"

"What I mean is that Mr. Greystock is, at least I should think so from what I hear, the very last man in the world to marry for money."

"What do you know of what a man would do?"

"It would be a very mean thing; particularly if he does not love her."

"Bother!" said the Countess. "They were very near it in town last year before Lord Fawn came up at all. I knew as much as that. And it 's what they 'll come to before they 've done."

"They 'll never come to it," said Lucy.

Then a sudden light flashed across the astute mind

of the Countess. She turned round in her chair, and sat for a while silent, looking at Lucy. Then she slowly asked another question. "He is n't your young man, is he?" To this Lucy made no reply. "So that 's it, is it?" said the dowager. "You 've done me the honour of making my house your home till my own sister's nephew shall be ready to marry you?"

"And why not?" asked Lucy, rather roughly.

"And Dame Greystock, from Bobsborough, has sent you here to keep you out of her son's way. I see it all. And that old frump at Richmond has passed you over to me because she did not choose to have such goings on under her own eye."

"There have been no goings on," said Lucy.

"And he 's to come here, I suppose, when my back 's turned?"

"He is not thinking of coming here. I don't know what you mean. Nobody has done anything wrong to you. I don't know why you say such cruel things."

"He can't afford to marry you, you know."

"I don't know anything about it. Perhaps we must wait ever so long; five years. That 's nobody's business but my own."

"I found it all out, did n't I?"

"Yes, you found it out."

"I 'm thinking of that sly old Dame Greystock at Bobsborough sending you here." Neither on that nor on the two following days did Lady Linlithgow say a word further to Lucy about her engagement.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TOO BAD FOR SYMPATHY.

When Frank Greystock left Bobsborough to go to Scotland, he had not said that he would return, nor had he at that time made up his mind whether he would do so or no. He had promised to go and shoot in Norfolk, and had half undertaken to be up in London with Herriot, working. Though it was holiday-time, still there was plenty of work for him to do, various heavy cases to get up and papers to be read, if only he could settle himself down to the doing of it. But the scenes down in Scotland had been of a nature to make him unfit for steady labour. How was he to sail his bark through the rocks by which his present voyage was rendered so dangerous? Of course, to the reader, the way to do so seems to be clear enough. To work hard at his profession, to explain to his cousin that she had altogether mistaken his feelings, and to be true to Lucy Morris, was so manifestly his duty, that to no reader will it appear possible that to any gentleman there could be a doubt. Instead of the existence of a difficulty, there was a flood of light upon his path, so the reader will think; a flood so clear that not to see his way was impossible. A man carried away by abnormal appetites, and wickedness, and the devil, may of course commit murder, or forge bills, or become a fraudulent director of a bankrupt company. And so

may a man be untrue to his troth, and leave true love in pursuit of tinsel, and beauty, and false words, and a large income. But why should one tell the story of creatures so base? One does not willingly grovel in gutters, or breathe fetid atmospheres, or live upon garbage. If we are to deal with heroes and heroines, let us, at any rate, have heroes and heroines who are above such meanness as falsehood in love. This Frank Greystock must be little better than a mean villain if he allows himself to be turned from his allegiance to Lucy Morris for an hour by the seductions and money of such a one as Lizzie Eustace.

We know the dear old rhyme:

> It is good to be merry and wise,
> It is good to be honest and true;
> It is good to be off with the old love
> Before you are on with the new.

There was never better truth spoken than this, and if all men and women could follow the advice here given, there would be very little sorrow in the world. But men and women do not follow it. They are no more able to do so than they are to use a spear, the staff of which is like a weaver's beam, or to fight with the sword Excalibar. The more they exercise their arms, the nearer will they get to using the giant's weapon, or even the weapon that is divine. But as things are at present, their limbs are limp and their muscles soft, and overfeeding impedes their breath. They attempt to be merry without being wise, and have themes about truth and honesty with which they desire to shackle others, thinking that freedom from such trammels may be good for themselves. And in that

matter of love, though love is very potent, treachery will sometimes seem to be prudence, and a hankering after new delights will often interfere with real devotion.

It is very easy to depict a hero, a man absolutely stainless, perfect as an Arthur, a man honest in all his dealings, equal to all trials, true in all his speech, indifferent to his own prosperity, struggling for the general good, and, above all, faithful in love. At any rate, it is as easy to do that as to tell of the man who is one hour good and the next bad, who aspires greatly but fails in practice, who sees the higher but too often follows the lower course. There arose at one time a school of art which delighted to paint the human face as perfect in beauty; and from that time to this we are discontented unless every woman is drawn for us as a Venus, or at least a Madonna. I do not know that we have gained much by this untrue portraiture, either in beauty or in art. There may be made for us a pretty thing to look at, no doubt; but we know that that pretty thing is not really visaged as the mistress whom we serve, and whose lineaments we desire to perpetuate on the canvas. The winds of heaven, or the flesh-pots of Egypt, or the midnight gas, passions, pains, and perhaps rouge and powder, have made her something different. But still there is the fire of her eye and the eager eloquence of her mouth, and something too, perhaps, left of the departing innocence of youth, which the painter might give us without the Venus or the Madonna touches. But the painter does not dare do it. Indeed, he has painted so long after the other fashion that he would hate the canvas before him were he to give way to the rouge-begotten roughness or to the flesh-pots, or even to the winds. And how, my

lord, would you, who are giving hundreds, more than hundreds, for this portrait of your dear one, like to see it in print from the art critic of the day, that she is a brazen-faced hoyden who seems to have had a glass of wine too much, or to have been making hay?

And so also has the reading world taught itself to like best the characters of all but divine men and women. Let the man who paints with pen and ink give the gas-light and the flesh-pots, the passions and pains, the prurient prudence and the rouge-pots and pounce-boxes of the world as it is, and he will be told that no one can care a straw for his creations. With whom are we to sympathise? says the reader, who not unnaturally imagines that a hero should be heroic. Oh, thou, my reader, whose sympathies are in truth the great and only aim of my work, when you have called the dearest of your friends round you to your hospitable table, how many heroes are there sitting at the board? Your bosom friend, even if he be a knight without fear, he is a knight without reproach? The Ivanhoe that you know, did he not press Rebecca's hand? Your Lord Evandale, did he not bring his coronet into play when he strove to win his Edith Bellenden? Was your Tresilian still true and still forbearing when truth and forbearance could avail him nothing? And those sweet girls whom you know, do they never doubt between the poor man they think they love and the rich man whose riches they know they covet?

Go into the market, either to buy or sell, and name the thing you desire to part with or to get, as it is, and the market is closed against you. Middling oats are the sweepings of the granaries. A useful horse

is a jade gone at every point. Good sound port is sloe juice. No assurance short of A 1 betokens even a pretence to merit. And yet in real life we are content with oats that are really middling, are very glad to have a useful horse, and know that if we drink port at all we must drink some that is neither good nor sound. In those delineations of life and character which we call novels, a similarly superlative vein is desired. Our own friends around us are not always merry and wise, nor, alas, always honest and true. They are often cross and foolish, and sometimes treacherous and false. They are so, and we are angry. Then we forgive them, not without a consciousness of imperfection on our own part. And we know, or at least believe, that though they be sometimes treacherous and false, there is a balance of good. We cannot have heroes to dine with us. There are none. And were these heroes to be had, we should not like them. But neither are our friends villains, whose every aspiration is for evil, and whose every moment is a struggle for some achievement worthy of the devil.

The persons whom you cannot care for in a novel because they are so bad, are the very same that you so dearly love in your life because they are so good. To make them and ourselves somewhat better, not by one spring heavenward to perfection, because we cannot so use our legs, but by slow climbing, is, we may presume, the object of all teachers, leaders, legislators, spiritual pastors, and masters. He who writes tales such as this probably also has, very humbly, some such object distantly before him. A picture of surpassing godlike nobleness, a picture of a King Arthur among men,

may perhaps do much. But such pictures cannot do all. When such a picture is painted, as intending to show what a man should be, it is true. If painted to show what men are, it is false. The true picture of life as it is, if it could be adequately painted, would show men what they are and how they might rise, not indeed to perfection, but one step first, and then another, on the ladder.

Our hero, Frank Greystock, falling lamentably short in his heroism, was not in a happy state of mind when he reached Bobsborough. It may be that he returned to his own borough and to his mother's arms because he felt that were he to determine to be false to Lucy he would there receive sympathy in his treachery. His mother would, at any rate, think that it was well, and his father would acknowledge that the fault committed was in the original engagement with poor Lucy, and not in the treachery. He had written that letter to her in his chambers one night in a fit of ecstasy; and could it be right that the ruin of a whole life should be the consequence?

It can hardly be too strongly asserted that Lizzie Greystock did not appear to Frank as she has been made to appear to the reader. In all this affair of the necklace he was beginning to believe that she was really an ill-used woman; and as to other traits in Lizzie's character, traits which he had seen, and which were not of a nature to attract, it must be remembered that beauty reclining in a man's arms does go far toward washing white the lovely blackamoor. Lady Linlithgow, upon whom Lizzie's beauty could have no effect of that kind, had nevertheless declared her to be very beautiful. And this loveliness was of a nature that

was altogether pleasing, if once the beholder of it could get over the idea of falseness which certainly Lizzie's eye was apt to convey to the beholder. There was no unclean horse's tail. There was no get-up of flounces, and padding, and paint, and hair, with a dorsal excrescence appended, with the object surely of showing in triumph how much absurd ugliness women can force men to endure. She was lithe, and active, and bright, and was at this moment of her life at her best. Her growing charms had as yet hardly reached the limits of full feminine loveliness, which, when reached, have been surpassed. Luxuriant beauty had with her not as yet become comeliness; nor had age or the good things of the world added a pound to the fairy lightness of her footstep. All this had been tendered to Frank, and with it that worldly wealth which was so absolutely necessary to his career. For though Greystock would not have said to any man or woman that nature had intended him to be a spender of much money and a consumer of many good things, he did undoubtedly so think of himself. He was a Greystock, and to what miseries would he not reduce his Lucy if, burdened by such propensities, he were to marry her and then become an aristocratic pauper!

The offer of herself by a woman to a man is, to us all, a thing so distasteful that we at once declare that the woman must be abominable. There shall be no whitewashing of Lizzie Eustace. She was abominable. But the man to whom the offer is made hardly sees the thing in the same light. He is disposed to believe that, in his peculiar case, there are circumstances by which the woman is, if not justified, at least excused. Frank did put faith in his cousin's love for himself. He did

credit her when she told him that she had accepted Lord Fawn's offer in pique, because he had not come to her when he had promised that he would come. It did seem natural to him that she should have desired to adhere to her engagement when he would not advise her to depart from it. And then her jealousy about Lucy's ring, and her abuse of Lucy, were proofs to him of her love. Unless she loved him, why should she care to marry him? What was his position that she should desire to share it, unless she so desired because he was dearer to her than aught beside? He had not eyes clear enough to perceive that his cousin was a witch whistling for a wind, and ready to take the first blast that would carry her and her broomstick somewhere into the sky. And then, in that matter of the offer, which in ordinary circumstances certainly should not have come from her to him, did not the fact of her wealth and of his comparative poverty cleanse her from such stain as would, in usual circumstances, attach to a woman who is so forward? He had not acceded to her proposition. He had not denied his engagement to Lucy. He had left her presence without a word of encouragement, because of that engagement. But he believed that Lizzie was sincere. He believed, now, that she was genuine; though he had previously been all but sure that falsehood and artifice were second nature to her.

At Bobsborough he met his constituents, and made them the normal autumn speech. The men of Bobsborough were well pleased and gave him a vote of confidence. As none but those of his own party attended the meeting, it was not wonderful that the vote was unanimous. His father, mother, and sister all

heard his speech, and there was a strong family feeling that Frank was born to set the Greystocks once more upon their legs. When a man can say what he likes with the certainty that every word will be reported, and can speak to those around him as one manifestly their superior, he always looms large. When the Conservatives should return to their proper place at the head of affairs, there could be no doubt that Frank Greystock would be made Solicitor-General. There were not wanting even ardent admirers, who conceived that, with such claims and such talents as his, the ordinary steps in political promotion would not be needed, and that he would become Attorney-General at once. All men began to say all good things to the dean, and to Mrs. Greystock it seemed that the woolsack, or at least the Queen's Bench with a peerage, was hardly an uncertainty. But then, there must be no marriage with a penniless governess. If he would only marry his cousin, one might say that the woolsack was won.

Then came Lucy's letter; the pretty, dear, joking letter about the "duchess" and broken hearts. "I would break my heart, only — only — only — " Yes, he knew very well what she meant. I shall never be called upon to break my heart, because you are not a false scoundrel. If you were a false scoundrel — instead of being, as you are, a pearl among men — then I should break my heart. That was what Lucy meant. She could not have been much clearer, and he understood it perfectly. It is very nice to walk about one's own borough and be voted unanimously worthy of confidence, and be a great man; but if you are a scoundrel, and not used to being a scoundrel, black

care is apt to sit very close behind you as you go caracoling along the streets.

Lucy's letter required an answer, and how should he answer it? He certainly did not wish her to tell Lady Linlithgow of her engagement, but Lucy clearly wished to be allowed to tell, and on what ground could he enjoin her to be silent? He knew, or he thought he knew, that till he answered the letter, she would not tell his secret; and therefore from day to day he put off the answer. A man does not write a love-letter usually when he is in doubt himself whether he does or does not mean to be a scoundrel.

Then there came a letter to "Dame" Greystock, from Lady Linlithgow, which filled them all with amazement.

"My Dear Madam," began the letter: —

"Seeing that your son is engaged to marry Miss Morris — at least she says so — you ought not to have sent her here without telling me all about it. She says you know of the match, and she says that I can write to you if I please. Of course I can do that without her leave. But it seems to me that if you know all about it, and approve the marriage, your house and not mine would be the proper place for her.

"I 'm told that Mr. Greystock is a great man. Any lady being with me as my companion can't be a great woman. But perhaps you wanted to break it off; else you would have told me. She shall stay here six months, but then she must go.

"Yours truly,

"Susanna Linlithgow."

It was considered absolutely necessary that this letter should be shown to Frank. "You see," said his mother, "she told the old lady at once."

"I don't see why she should n't." Nevertheless Frank was annoyed. Having asked for permission, Lucy should at least have waited for a reply.

"Well, I don't know," said Mrs. Greystock. "It is generally considered that young ladies are more reticent about such things. She has blurted it out and boasted about it at once."

"I thought girls always told of their engagements," said Frank, "and I can't for the life of me see that there was any boasting in it." Then he was silent for a moment. "The truth is, we are all of us treating Lucy very badly."

"I cannot say that I see it," said his mother.

"We ought to have had her here."

"For how long, Frank?"

"For as long as a home was needed by her."

"Had you demanded it, Frank, she should have come, of course. But neither I nor your father could have had pleasure in receiving her as your future wife. You yourself say that it cannot be for two years at least."

"I said one year."

"I think, Frank, you said two. And we all know that such a marriage would be ruinous to you. How could we make her welcome? Can you see your way to having a house for her to live in within twelve months?"

"Why not a house? I could have a house to-morrow."

"Such a house as would suit you in your position?

And, Frank, would it be a kindness to marry her and then let her find that you were in debt?"

"I don't believe she 'd care if she had nothing but a crust to eat."

"She ought to care, Frank."

"I think," said the dean to his son on the next day, "that in our class of life an imprudent marriage is the one thing that should be avoided. My marriage has been very happy, God knows; but I have always been a poor man, and feel it now when I am quite unable to help you. And yet your mother had some fortune. Nobody, I think, cares less for wealth than I do. I am content almost with nothing." — The nothing with which the dean had hitherto been contented had always included every comfort of life, a well-kept table, good wine, new books, and canonical habiliments with the gloss still on; but as the Bobsborough tradesmen had, through the agency of Mrs. Greystock, always supplied him with these things as though they came from the clouds, he really did believe that he had never asked for anything. — "I am content almost with nothing. But I do feel that marriage cannot be adopted as the ordinary form of life by men in our class as it can be by the rich or by the poor. You, for instance, are called upon to live with the rich, but are not rich. That can only be done by wary walking, and is hardly consistent with a wife and children."

"But men in my position do marry, sir."

"After a certain age; or else they marry ladies with money. You see, Frank, there are not many men who go into Parliament with means so moderate as yours; and they who do, perhaps have stricter ideas of

economy." The dean did not say a word about Lucy Morris, and dealt entirely with generalities.

In compliance with her son's advice — or almost command — Mrs. Greystock did not answer Lady Linlithgow's letter. He was going back to London, and would give personally, or by letter written there, what answer might be necessary.

"You will then see Miss Morris?" asked his mother.

"I shall certainly see Lucy. Something must be settled." There was a tone in his voice as he said this which gave some comfort to his mother.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LIZZIE'S GUESTS.

TRUE to their words, at the end of October, Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss Roanoke, and Lord George de Bruce Carruthers and Sir Griffin Tewett, arrived at Portray Castle. And for a couple of days there was a visitor whom Lizzie was very glad to welcome, but of whose good nature on the occasion Mr. Camperdown thought very ill indeed. This was John Eustace. His sister-in-law wrote to him in very pressing language; and as — so he said to Mr. Camperdown — he did not wish to seem to quarrel with his brother's widow as long as such seeming might be avoided, he accepted the invitation. If there was to be a lawsuit about the diamonds, that must be Mr. Camperdown's affair. Lizzie had never entertained her friends in style before. She had had a few people to dine with her in London and once or twice had received company on an evening. But in all her London doings there had been the trepidation of fear, to be accounted for by her youth and widowhood; and it was at Portray — her own house at Portray — that it would best become her to exercise hospitality. She had bided her time even there, but now she meant to show her friends that she had got a house of her own.

She wrote even to her husband's uncle, the bishop, asking him down to Portray. He could not come, but sent an affectionate answer, and thanked her for thinking of him. Many people she asked who, she felt sure, would not come, and one or two of them accepted her invitation. John Eustace promised to be with her for two days. When Frank had left her, going out of her presence in the manner that has been described, she actually wrote to him, begging him to join her party. This was her note:

"Come to me, just for a week," she said, "when my people are here, so that I may not seem to be deserted. Sit at the bottom of my table, and be to me as a brother might. I shall expect you to do so much for me." To this he replied that he would come during the first week in November.

And she got a clergyman down from London — the Rev. Joseph Emilius, of whom it was said that he was born a Jew in Hungary, and that his name in his own country had been Mealyus. At the present time he was among the most eloquent of London preachers, and was reputed by some to have reached such a standard of pulpit oratory as to have had no equal within the memory of living hearers. In regard to his reading it was acknowledged that no one since Mrs. Siddons had touched him. But he did not get on very well with any particular bishop, and there was doubt in the minds of some people whether there was or was not any — Mrs. Emilius. He had come up quite suddenly within the last season, and had made church-going quite a pleasant occupation to Lizzie Eustace.

On the last day of October Mr. Emilius and Mr. John Eustace came, each alone. Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss

Roanoke came over with post-horses from Ayr, as also did Lord George and Sir Griffin about an hour after them. Frank was not yet expected. He had promised to name a day, and had not yet named it.

"Varra weel, varra weel," Gowran had said when he was told of what was about to occur, and was desired to make preparations necessary in regard to the outside plenishing of the house; "nae doot she 'll do with her ain what pleases her ainself. The mair ye poor out, the less there 'll be left in. Mr. Jo-ohn coming? I 'll be glad then to see Mr. Jo-ohn. Oo, ay; aits;— there 'll be aits eneuch. And anither coo! You 'll want twa ither coos. I 'll see to the coos." And Andy Gowran, in spite of the internecine warfare which existed between him and his mistress, did see to the hay, and the cows, and the oats, and the extra servants that were wanted inside and outside the house. There was enmity between him and Lady Eustace, and he did n't care who knew it; but he took her wages and he did her work.

Mrs. Carbuncle was a wonderful woman. She was the wife of a man with whom she was very rarely seen, whom nobody knew, who was something in the City, but somebody who never succeeded in making money; and yet she went everywhere. She had at least the reputation of going everywhere, and did go to a great many places. Carbuncle had no money — so it was said; and she had none. She was the daughter of a man who had gone to New York and had failed there. Of her own parentage no more was known. She had a small house in one of the very small May Fair streets, to which she was wont to invite her friends for five o'clock tea. Other receptions she never at-

tempted. During the London seasons she always kept a carriage, and during the winters she always had hunters. Who paid for them no one knew or cared. Her dress was always perfect, as far as fit and performance went. As to approving Mrs. Carbuncle's manner of dress — that was a question of taste. Audacity may, perhaps, be said to have been the ruling principle of her toilet; not the audacity of indecency, which, let the satirists say what they may, is not efficacious in England, but audacity in colour, audacity in design, and audacity in construction. She would ride in the park in a black and yellow habit, and appear at the opera in white velvet without a speck of colour. Though certainly turned thirty, and probably nearer to forty, she would wear her jet-black hair streaming down her back, and when June came would drive about London in a straw hat. But yet it was always admitted that she was well dressed. And then would arise that question, Who paid the bills?

Mrs. Carbuncle was certainly a handsome woman. She was full-faced, with bold eyes, rather far apart, perfect black eyebrows, a well-formed broad nose, thick lips, and regular teeth. Her chin was round and short, with perhaps a little bearing towards a double chin. But though her face was plump and round, there was a power in it, and a look of command, of which it was perhaps difficult to say in what features was the seat. But in truth the mind will lend a tone to every feature, and it was the desire of Mrs. Carbuncle's heart to command. But perhaps the wonder of her face was its complexion. People said, before they knew her, that, as a matter of course, she had been made beautiful forever. But,

though that too brilliant colour was almost always there, covering the cheeks but never touching the forehead or the neck, it would at certain moments shift, change, and even depart. When she was angry, it would vanish for a moment and then return intensified. There was no chemistry on Mrs. Carbuncle's cheek; and yet it was a tint so brilliant and so little transparent as almost to justify a conviction that it could not be genuine. There were those who declared that nothing in the way of complexion so beautiful as that of Mrs. Carbuncle's had been seen on the face of any other woman in this age, and there were others who called her an exaggerated milkmaid. She was tall, too, and had learned so to walk as though half the world belonged to her.

Her niece, Miss Roanoke, was a lady of the same stamp, and of similar beauty, with those additions and also with those drawbacks which belong to youth. She looked as though she were four-and-twenty, but in truth she was no more than eighteen. When seen beside her aunt, she seemed to be no more than half the elder lady's size; and yet her proportions were not insignificant. She, too, was tall, and was as one used to command, and walked as though she were a young Juno. Her hair was very dark — almost black — and very plentiful. Her eyes were large and bright, though too bold for a girl so young. Her nose and mouth were exactly as her aunt's, but her chin was somewhat longer, so as to divest her face of that plump roundness, which perhaps took something from the majesty of Mrs. Carbuncle's appearance. Miss Roanoke's complexion was certainly marvellous. No one thought that she had been made beautiful forever, for the colour

would go and come and shift and change with every word and every thought; but still it was there, as deep on her cheeks as on her aunt's, though somewhat more transparent, and with more delicacy of tint as the bright hues faded away and became merged in the almost marble whiteness of her skin. With Mrs. Carbuncle there was no merging and fading. The red and white bordered one another on her cheek without any merging, as they do on a flag.

Lucinda Roanoke was undoubtedly a very handsome woman. It probably never occurred to man or woman to say that she was lovely. She had sat for her portrait during the last winter, and her picture had caused much remark in the Exhibition. Some said that she might be a Brinvilliers, others a Cleopatra, and others again a Queen of Sheba. In her eyes as they were limned there had been nothing certainly of love, but they who likened her to the Egyptian queen believed that Cleopatra's love had always been used simply to assist her ambition. They who took the Brinvilliers side of the controversy were men so used to softness and flattery from women as to have learned to think that a woman silent, arrogant, and hard of approach, must be always meditating murder. The disciples of the Queen of Sheba school, who formed perhaps the more numerous party, were led to their opinion by the majesty of Lucinda's demeanour rather than by any clear idea in their own minds of the lady who visited Solomon. All men, however, agreed in this, that Lucinda Roanoke was very handsome, but that she was not the sort of girl with whom a man would wish to stray away through the distant beech-trees at a picnic.

In truth she was silent, grave, and, if not really

haughty, subject to all the signs of haughtiness. She went everywhere with her aunt, and allowed herself to be walked out at dances, and to be accosted when on horseback, and to be spoken to at parties; but she seemed hardly to trouble herself to talk; and as for laughing, flirting, or giggling, one might as well expect such levity from a marble Minerva. During the last winter she had taken to hunting with her aunt, and already could ride well to hounds. If assistance were wanted at a gate, or in the management of a fence, and the servant who attended the two ladies were not near enough to give it, she would accept it as her due from the man nearest to her; but she rarely did more than bow her thanks, and, even by young lords, or hard-riding handsome colonels, or squires of undoubted thousands, she could hardly ever be brought to what might be called a proper hunting-field conversation. All of which things were noted, and spoken of, and admired. It must be presumed that Lucinda Roanoke was in want of a husband, and yet no girl seemed to take less pains to get one. A girl ought not to be always busying herself to bring down a man, but a girl ought to give herself some charms. A girl so handsome as Lucinda Roanoke, with pluck enough to ride like a bird, dignity enough for a duchess, and who was undoubtedly clever, ought to put herself in the way of taking such good things as her charms and merits would bring her; but Lucinda Roanoke stood aloof and despised everybody. So it was that Lucinda was spoken of when her name was mentioned; and her name was mentioned a good deal after the opening of the exhibition of pictures.

There was some difficulty about her — as to who she

was. That she was an American was the received opinion. Her mother, as well as Mrs. Carbuncle, had certainly been in New York. Carbuncle was a London man; but it was supposed that Mr. Roanoke was, or had been, an American. The received opinion was correct. Lucinda had been born in New York, had been educated there till she was sixteen, and then been taken to Paris for nine months, and from Paris had been brought to London by her aunt. Mrs. Carbuncle always spoke of Lucinda's education as having been thoroughly Parisian. Of her own education and antecedents, Lucinda never spoke at all. "I 'll tell you what it is," said a young scamp from Eton to his elder sister, when her character and position were once being discussed, "she 's a heroine, and would shoot a fellow as soon as look at him." In that scamp's family Lucinda was ever afterwards called the heroine.

The manner in which Lord George de Bruce Carruthers had attached himself to these ladies was a mystery; but then Lord George was always mysterious. He was a young man — so considered — about forty-five years of age, who had never done anything in the manner of other people. He hunted a great deal, but he did not fraternise with hunting men, and would appear now in this county and now in that, with an utter disregard of grass, fences, friendships, or foxes. Leicester, Essex, Ayrshire, or the Baron had equal delights for him; and in all counties he was quite at home. He had never owned a fortune, and had never been known to earn a shilling. It was said that early in life he had been apprenticed to an attorney at Aberdeen as George Carruthers. His third cousin, the Marquis of Killiecrankie, had been killed out hunting;

the second scion of the noble family had fallen at Balaclava; a third had perished in the Indian Mutiny; and a fourth, who did reign for a few months, died suddenly, leaving a large family of daughters. Within three years the four brothers vanished, leaving among them no male heir, and George's elder brother, who was then in a West India regiment, was called home from Demerara to be Marquis of Killiecrankie. By a usual exercise of the courtesy of the Crown, all the brothers were made lords, and some twelve years before the date of our story George Carruthers, who had long since left the attorney's office at Aberdeen, became Lord George de Bruce Carruthers. How he lived no one knew. That his brother did much for him was presumed to be impossible, as the property entailed on the Killiecrankie title certainly was not large. He sometimes went into the City, and was supposed to know something about shares. Perhaps he played a little, and made a few bets. He generally lived with men of means, or perhaps with one man of means at a time; but they who knew him well declared that he never borrowed a shilling from a friend, and never owed a guinea to a tradesman. He always had horses, but never had a home. When in London he lodged in a single room, and dined at his club. He was a Colonel of Volunteers, having got up the regiment known as the Long Shore Riflemen — the roughest regiment of volunteers in all England — and was reputed to be a bitter Radical. He was suspected even of republican sentiments, and ignorant young men about London hinted that he was the grand centre of the British Fenians. He had been invited to stand for the Tower Hamlets, but had told the deputation which waited upon him

that he knew a thing worth two of that. Would they guarantee his expenses, and then give him a salary? The deputation doubted its ability to promise so much. "I more than doubt it," said Lord George; and then the deputation went away.

In person he was a long-legged, long-bodied, long-faced man, with rough whiskers and a rough beard on his upper lip, but with a shorn chin. His eyes were very deep set in his head, and his cheeks were hollow and sallow; and yet he looked to be and was a powerful, healthy man. He had large hands, which seemed to be all bone, and long arms, and a neck which looked to be long, because he so wore his shirt that much of his throat was always bare. It was manifest enough that he liked to have good-looking women about him, and yet nobody presumed it probable that he would marry. For the last two or three years there had been friendship between him and Mrs. Carbuncle; and during the last season he had become almost intimate with our Lizzie. Lizzie thought that perhaps he might be the Corsair whom, sooner or later in her life, she must certainly encounter.

Sir Griffin Tewett, who at the present period of his existence was being led about by Lord George, was not exactly an amiable young baronet. Nor were his circumstances such as make a man amiable. He was nominally not only the heir to, but actually the possessor of a large property; but he could not touch the principal, and of the income only so much as certain legal curmudgeons would allow him. As Greystock had said, everybody was at law with him, so successful had been his father in mismanaging, and miscontrolling, and misappropriating the property. Tewett Hall had

gone to rack and ruin for four years, and was now let almost for nothing. He was a fair, frail young man, with a bad eye, and a weak mouth, and a thin hand, who was fond of liqueurs, and hated to the death any acquaintance who won a five-pound note of him, or any tradesman who wished to have his bill paid. But he had this redeeming quality — that having found Lucinda Roanoke to be the handsomest woman he had ever seen, he did desire to make her his wife.

Such were the friends whom Lizzie Eustace received at Portray Castle on the first day of her grand hospitality — together with John Eustace and Mr. Joseph Emilius, the fashionable preacher from May Fair.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LIZZIE'S FIRST DAY.

THE coming of John Eustace was certainly a great thing for Lizzie, though it was only for two days. It saved her from that feeling of desertion before her friends — desertion by those who might naturally belong to her — which would otherwise have afflicted her. His presence there for two days gave her a start. She could call him John, and bring down her boy to him, and remind him, with the sweetest smile — with almost a tear in her eye — that he was the boy's guardian. "Little fellow! So much depends on that little life, does it not, John?" she said, whispering the words into his ear.

"Lucky little dog!" said John, patting the boy's head. "Let me see! of course he 'll go to Eton."

"Not yet," said Lizzie with a shudder.

"Well, no, hardly; when he 's twelve." And then the boy was done with and was carried away. She had played that card and had turned her trick. John Eustace was a thoroughly good-natured man of the world, who could forgive many faults, not expecting people to be perfect. He did not like Mrs. Carbuncle; was indifferent to Lucinda's beauty; was afraid of that Tartar, Lord George; and thoroughy despised Sir Griffin. In his heart he believed Mr. Emilius to be an impostor, who might, for aught he knew, pick his pocket: and Miss Macnulty had no attraction for him.

But he smiled, and was gay, and called Lady Eustace by her Christian name, and was content to be of use to her in showing her friends that she had not been altogether dropped by the Eustace people.

"I got such a nice affectionate letter from the dear bishop," said Lizzie, "but he could n't come. He could not escape a previous engagement."

"It 's a long way," said John, "and he 's not so young as he was once; and then there are the Bobsborough parsons to look after."

"I don't suppose anything of that kind stops him," said Lizzie, who did not think it possible that a bishop's bliss should be alloyed by work. John was so very nice that she almost made up her mind to talk to him about the necklace; but she was cautious, and thought of it, and found that it would be better that she should abstain. John Eustace was certainly very good-natured, but perhaps he might say an ugly word to her if she were rash. She refrained, therefore, and after breakfast on the second day he took his departure without an allusion to things that were unpleasant.

"I call my brother-in-law a perfect gentleman," said Lizzie with enthusiasm, when his back was turned.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Carbuncle. "He seems to me to be very quiet."

"He did n't quite like his party," said Lord George.

"I am sure he did," said Lizzie.

"I mean as to politics. To him we are all turbulent demagogues and Bohemians. Eustace is an old-world Tory, if there 's one left anywhere. But you 're right, Lady Eustace; he is a gentleman."

"He knows on which side his bread is buttered as well as any man," said Sir Griffin.

"Am I a demagogue," said Lizzie, appealing to the Corsair, "or a Bohemian? I did n't know it."

"A little in that way, I think, Lady Eustace; not a demagogue, but demagogical; not Bohemian, but that way given."

"And is Miss Roanoke demagogical?"

"Certainly," said Lord George. "I hardly wrong you there, Miss Roanoke?"

"Lucinda is a democrat, but hardly a demagogue, Lord George," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"Those are distinctions which we hardly understand on this thick-headed side of the water. But demagogues, democrats, demonstrations, and Demosthenic oratory are all equally odious to John Eustace. For a young man he 's about the best Tory I know."

"He is true to his colours," said Mr. Emilius, who had been endeavouring to awake the attention of Miss Roanoke on the subject of Shakespeare's dramatic action, "and I like men who are true to their colours." Mr. Mealyus spoke with the slightest possible tone of foreign accent — a tone so slight that it simply served to attract attention to him.

While Eustace was still in the house, there had come a letter from Frank Greystock, saying that he would reach Portray, by way of Glasgow, on Wednesday, the 5th of November. He must sleep in Glasgow on that night, having business, or friends, or pleasure demanding his attention in that prosperous mart of commerce. It had been impressed upon him that he should hunt, and he had consented. There was to be a meet out on the Kilmarnock side of the county on that Wednesday, and he would bring a horse with him from Glasgow. Even in Glasgow a hunter was to be hired,

and could be sent forty or fifty miles out of the town in the morning and brought back in the evening. Lizzie had learned all about that, and had told him. If he would call at MacFarlane's stables in Buchanan street, or even write to Mr. MacFarlane, he would be sure to get a horse that would carry him. MacFarlane was sending horses down into the Ayrshire country every day of his life. It was simply an affair of money. Three guineas for the horse, and then just the expense of the railway. Frank, who knew quite as much about it as did his cousin, and who never thought much of guineas or of railway tickets, promised to meet the party at the meet ready equipped. His things would go on by train, and Lizzie must send for them to Troon. He presumed a beneficent Providence would take the horse back to the bosom of Mr. MacFarlane. Such was the tenor of his letter. "If he don't mind, he 'll find himself astray," said Sir Griffin. "He 'll have to go one way by rail and his horse another."

"We can manage better for our cousin than that," said Lizzie, with a rebuking nod.

But there was hunting from Portray before Frank Greystock came. It was specially a hunting party, and Lizzie was to be introduced to the glories of the field. In giving her her due, it must be acknowledged that she was fit for the work. She rode well, though she had not ridden to hounds, and her courage was cool. She looked well on horseback, and had that presence of mind which should never desert a lady when she is hunting. A couple of horses had been purchased for her, under Lord George's superintendence — his conjointly with Mrs. Carbuncle's — and had been at the castle for the last ten days, "eating their varra heeds

off," as Andy Gowran had said in sorrow. There had been practising even while John Eustace was there, and before her preceptors had slept three nights at the castle she had ridden backward and forward half a dozen times over a stone wall.

"Oh, yes," Lucinda had said, in answer to a remark from Sir Griffin, "it 's easy enough — till you come across something difficult."

"Nothing difficult stops you," said Sir Griffin; to which compliment Lucinda vouchsafed no reply.

On the Monday Lizzie went out hunting for the first time in her life. It must be owned that, as she put her habit on, and afterward breakfasted with all her guests in hunting gear around her, and then was driven with them in her own carriage to the meet, there was something of trepidation at her heart. And her feeling of cautious fear in regard to money had received a shock. Mrs. Carbuncle had told her that a couple of horses fit to carry her might perhaps cost her about £180. Lord George had received the commission, and the check required from her had been for £320. Of course she had written the check without a word, but it did begin to occur to her that hunting was an expensive amusement. Gowran had informed her that he had bought a rick of hay from a neighbour for £75 15*s.* 9*d.* "God forgie me," said Andy, "but I b'lieve I 've been o'er hard on the puir man in your leddyship's service." £75 15*s.* 9*d.* did seem a great deal of money to pay; and could it be necessary that she should buy a whole rick? There were to be eight horses in the stable. To what friend could she apply to learn how much of a rick of hay one horse ought to eat in a month of hunting? In such a matter she

might have trusted Andy Gowran implicitly; but how was she to know that? And then, what if at some desperate fence she were to be thrown off and break her nose and knock out her front teeth! Was the game worth the candle? She was by no means sure that she liked Mrs. Carbuncle very much. And though she liked Lord George very well, could it be possible that he bought the horses for £90 each and charged her £160? Corsairs do do these sort of things. The horses themselves were two sweet dears, with stars on their foreheads, and shining coats, and a delicious aptitude for jumping over everything at a moment's notice. Lord George had not, in truth, made a penny by them, and they were good hunters, worth the money; but how was Lizzie to know that? But though she doubted, and was full of fears, she could smile and look as though she liked it. If the worst should come she could certainly get money for the diamonds.

On that Monday the meet was comparatively near to them — distant only twelve miles. On the following Wednesday it would be sixteen, and they would use the railway, having the carriage sent to meet them in the evening. The three ladies and Lord George filled the carriage, and Sir Griffin was perched upon the box. The ladies' horses had gone on with two grooms, and those for Lord George and Sir Griffin were to come to the meet. Lizzie felt somewhat proud of her establishment and her equipage, but at the same time somewhat fearful. Hitherto she knew but very little of the country people, and was not sure how she might be received; and then how would it be with her if the fox should at once start away across country, and she should lack either the pluck or the power to

follow? There was Sir Griffin to look after Miss Roanoke, and Lord George to attend to Mrs. Carbuncle. At last an idea so horrible struck her that she could not keep it down. "What am I to do," she said, "if I find myself all alone in a field, and everybody else gone away?"

"We won't treat you quite in that fashion," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"The only possible way in which you can be alone in a field is that you will have cut everybody else down," said Lord George.

"I suppose it will all come right," said Lizzie, plucking up her courage, and telling herself that a woman can die but once.

Everything was right — as it usually is. The horses were there — quite a throng of horses, as the two gentlemen had two each; and there was, moreover, a mounted groom to look after the three ladies. Lizzie had desired to have a groom to herself, but had been told that the expenditure in horseflesh was more than the stable could stand. "All I ever want of a man is to carry for me my flask, and waterproof, and luncheon," said Mrs. Carbuncle. "I don't care if I never see a groom, except for that."

"It 's convenient to have a gate opened sometimes," said Lucinda, slowly.

"Will no one but a groom do that for you?" asked Sir Griffin.

"Gentlemen can't open gates," said Lucinda. Now, as Sir Griffin thought that he had opened many gates during the last season for Miss Roanoke, he felt this to be hard.

But there were eight horses, and eight horses with

three servants and a carriage made quite a throng. Among the crowd of Ayrshire hunting men — a lord or two, a dozen lairds, two dozen farmers, and as many men of business out of Ayr, Kilmarnock, and away from Glasgow — it was soon told that Lady Eustace and her party were among them. A good deal had been already heard of Lizzie, and it was at least known of her that she had, for her life, the Portray estate in her hands. So there was an undercurrent of whispering, and that sort of commotion which the appearance of new-comers does produce at a hunt-meet. Lord George knew one or two men, who were surprised to find him in Ayrshire, and Mrs. Carbuncle was soon quite at home with a young nobleman whom she had met in the Vale with the Baron. Sir Griffin did not leave Lucinda's side, and for a while poor Lizzie felt herself alone in a crowd.

Who does not know that terrible feeling, and the all but necessity that exists for the sufferer to pretend that he is not suffering — which again is aggravated by the conviction that the pretence is utterly vain? This may be bad with a man, but with a woman, who never looks to be alone in a crowd, it is terrible. For five minutes, during which everybody else was speaking to everybody — for five minutes, which seemed to her to be an hour, Lizzie spoke to no one, and no one spoke to her. Was it for such misery as this that she was spending hundreds upon hundreds, and running herself into debt? For she was sure that there would be debt before she parted with Mrs. Carbuncle. There are people, very many people, to whom an act of hospitality is in itself a good thing; but there are others who are always making calculations, and endeavouring to

count up the thing purchased against the cost. Lizzie had been told that she was a rich woman — as women go, very rich. Surely she was entitled to entertain a few friends; and if Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss Roanoke could hunt, it could not be that hunting was beyond her own means. And yet she was spending a great deal of money. She had seen a large wagon loaded with sacks of corn coming up the hill to the Portray stables, and she knew that there would be a long bill at the corn-chandler's. There had been found a supply of wine in the cellars at Portray, which at her request had been inspected by her cousin Frank; but it had been necessary, so he had told her, to have much more sent down from London — champagne, and liqueurs, and other nice things that cost money.

"You won't like not to have them if these people are coming?"

"Oh, no; certainly not," said Lizzie, with enthusiasm. What other rich people did, she would do. But now, in her five minutes of misery, she counted it all up, and was at a loss to find what was to be her return for her expenditure. And then, if on this, her first day, she should have a fall, with no tender hand to help her, and then find that she had knocked out her front teeth!

But the cavalcade began to move, and then Lord George was by her side. "You must n't be angry if I seem to stick too close to you," he said. She gave him her sweetest smile as she told him that that would be impossible. "Because, you know, though it 's the easiest thing in the world to get along out hunting, and women never come to grief, a person is a little astray at first."

"I shall be so much astray," said Lizzie. "I don't at all know how we are going to begin. Are we hunting a fox now?" At this moment they were trotting across a field or two, through a run of gates up to the first covert.

"Not quite yet. The hounds have n't been put in yet. You see that wood there? I suppose they 'll draw that."

"What is drawing, Lord George? I want to know all about it, and I am so ignorant. Nobody else will tell me." Then Lord George gave his lesson, and explained the theory and system of foxhunting.

"We 're to wait here, then, till the fox runs away? But it 's ever so large, and if he runs away, and nobody sees him? I hope he will, because it will be nice to go on easily."

"A great many people hope that, and a great many think it nice to go on easily. Only you must not confess to it." Then he went on with his lecture, and explained the meaning of scent; was great on the difficulty of getting away; described the iniquity of heading the fox; spoke of up wind and down wind; got as far as the trouble of "carrying," and told her that a good ear was everything in a big wood — when there came upon them the thrice-repeated note of an old hound's voice, and the quick scampering, and low, timid, anxious, trustful whinnying of a dozen comrade younger hounds, who recognised the sagacity of their well-known and highly-appreciated elder.

"That 's a fox," said Lord George.

"What shall I do now?" said Lizzie, all in a twitter.

"Sit just where you are, and light a cigar, if you 're given to smoking."

"Pray don't joke with me. You know I want to do it properly."

"And therefore you must sit just where you are, and not gallop about. There 's a matter of a hundred and twenty acres here, I should say, and a fox does n't always choose to be evicted at the first notice. It 's a chance whether he goes at all from a wood like this. I like woods myself, because, as you say, we can take it easy; but if you want to ride, you should — By George, they 've killed him."

"Killed the fox?"

"Yes; he 's dead. Did n't you hear?"

"And is that a hunt?"

"Well — as far as it goes, it is."

"Why did n't he run away? What a stupid beast! I don't see so very much in that. Who killed him? That man that was blowing the horn?"

"The hounds chopped him."

"Chopped him!" Lord George was very patient, and explained to Lizzie, who was now indignant and disappointed, the misfortune of chopping. "And are we to go home now? Is it all over?"

"They say the country is full of foxes," said Lord George. "Perhaps we shall chop half a dozen."

"Dear me! Chop half a dozen foxes! Do they like to be chopped? I thought they always ran away."

Lord George was constant and patient, and rode at Lizzie's side from covert to covert. A second fox they did kill in the same fashion as the first; a third they could n't hunt a yard; a fourth got to ground after five minutes, and was dug out ingloriously, during which process a drizzling rain commenced.

"Where is the man with my waterproof?" demanded Mrs. Carbuncle. Lord George had sent the man to see whether there was shelter to be had in a neighbouring yard. And Mrs. Carbuncle was angry. "It 's my own fault," she said, "for not having my own man. Lucinda, you 'll be wet."

"I don't mind the wet," said Lucinda. Lucinda never did mind anything.

"If you 'll come with me, we 'll get into a barn," said Sir Griffin.

"I like the wet," said Lucinda. All the while seven men were at work with picks and shovels, and the master and four or five of the more ardent sportsmen were deeply engaged in what seemed to be a mining operation on a small scale. The huntsman stood over giving his orders. One enthusiastic man, who had been lying on his belly, grovelling in the mud for five minutes, with a long stick in his hand, was now applying the point of it scientifically to his nose. An ordinary observer with a magnifying glass might have seen a hair at the end of the stick.

"He 's there," said the enthusiastic man, covered with mud, after a long-drawn eager sniff at the stick. The huntsman deigned to give one glance.

"That 's rabbit," said the huntsman. A conclave was immediately formed over the one visible hair that stuck to the stick, and three experienced farmers decided that it was rabbit. The muddy, enthusiastic man, silenced but not convinced, retired from the crowd, leaving his stick behind him, and comforted himself with his brandy-flask.

"He 's here, my lord," said the huntsman to his noble master, "only we ain't got nigh him yet." He

spoke almost in a whisper, so that the ignorant crowd should not hear the words of wisdom, which they would n't understand, or perhaps believe. "It 's that full of rabbits that the holes is all hairs. They ain't got no terrier here, I suppose. They never has aught that is wanted in these parts. Work round to the right, there — that 's his line." The men did work round to the right, and in something under an hour the fox was dragged out by his brush and hind legs, while the experienced whip who dragged him held the poor brute tight by the back of his neck. "An old dog, my lord. There 's such a many of 'em here, that they 'll be a deal better for a little killing." Then the hounds ate their third fox for that day.

Lady Eustace, in the mean time, and Mrs. Carbuncle, with Lord George, had found their way to the shelter of a cattle-shed. Lucinda had slowly followed, and Sir Griffin had followed her. The gentlemen smoked cigars, and the ladies, when they had eaten their luncheons and drank their sherry, were cold and cross.

"If this is hunting," said Lizzie, "I really don't think so much about it."

"It 's Scotch hunting," said Mrs. Carbuncle.

"I have seen foxes dug out south of the Tweed," suggested Lord George.

"I suppose everything is slow after the Baron," said Mrs. Carbuncle, who had distinguished herself with the Baron's stag-hounds last March.

"Are we to go home now?" asked Lizzie, who would have been well pleased to have received an answer in the affirmative.

"I presume they 'll draw again," exclaimed Mrs.

Carbuncle, with an angry frown on her brow. "It's hardly two o'clock."

"They always draw till seven in Scotland," said Lord George.

"That's nonsense," said Mrs. Carbuncle. "It's dark at four."

"They have torches in Scotland," said Lord George.

"They have a great many things in Scotland that are very far from agreeable," said Mrs. Carbuncle. "Lucinda, did you ever see three foxes killed without five minutes' running, before? I never did."

"I've been out all day without finding at all," said Lucinda, who loved the truth.

"And so have I," said Sir Griffin; "often. Don't you remember that day when we went down from London to Bringher Wood, and they pretended to find at half-past four? That's what I call a sell."

"They're going on, Lady Eustace," said Lord George. "If you're not tired, we might as well see it out." Lizzie was tired, but said that she was not, and she did see it out. They found a fifth fox, but again there was no scent. "Who the —— is to hunt a fox with people scurrying about like that?" said the huntsman very angrily, dashing forward at a couple of riders. "The hounds is behind you, only you ain't a-looking. Some people never do look." The two peccant riders, unfortunately, were Sir Griffin and Lucinda.

The day was one of those from which all the men and women return home cross, and which induce some half-hearted folk to declare to themselves that they never will hunt again. When the master decided a little after three that he would draw no more, because

there was n't a yard of scent, our party had nine or ten miles to ride back to their carriages. Lizzie was very tired, and when Lord George took her from her horse could almost have cried from fatigue. Mrs. Carbuncle was never fatigued, but she had become damp — soaking wet through, as she herself said — during the four minutes that the man was absent with her waterproof jacket, and could not bring herself to forget the ill-usage she had suffered. Lucinda had become absolutely dumb, and any observer would have fancied that the two gentlemen had quarrelled with each other.

"You ought to go on the box now," said Sir Griffin, grumbling.

"When you 're my age and I 'm yours, I will," said Lord George, taking his seat in the carriage. Then he appealed to Lizzie. "You 'll let me smoke, won't you?" She simply bowed her head. And so they went home — Lord George smoking, and the ladies dumb. Lizzie, as she dressed for dinner, almost cried with vexation and disappointment.

There was a little conversation up-stairs between Mrs. Carbuncle and Lucinda, when they were free from the attendance of their joint maid. "It seems to me," said Mrs. Carbuncle, "that you won't make up your mind about anything."

"There is nothing to make up my mind about."

"I think there is — a great deal. Do you mean to take this man who is dangling after you?"

"He is n't worth taking."

"Carruthers says that the property must come right, sooner or later. You might do better, perhaps, but you won't trouble yourself. We can't go on like this forever, you know."

"If you hated it as much as I do, you would n't want to go on."

"Why don't you talk to him? I don't think he 's at all a bad fellow."

"I 've nothing to say."

"He 'll offer to-morrow, if you 'll accept him."

"Don't let him do that, Aunt Jane. I could n't say Yes. As for loving him — oh, laws!"

"It won't do to go on like this, you know."

"I 'm only eighteen; and it 's my money, aunt."

"And how long will it last? If you can't accept him, refuse him, and let somebody else come."

"It seems to me," said Lucinda, "that one is as bad as another. I 'd a deal sooner marry a shoemaker and help him to make him shoes."

"That 's downright wickedness," said Mrs. Carbuncle. And then they went down to dinner.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NAPPIE'S GRAY HORSE.

During the leisure of Tuesday our friends regained their good humour, and on the Wednesday morning they again started for the hunting-field. Mrs. Carbuncle, who probably felt that she had behaved ill about the groom and in regard to Scotland, almost made an apology, and explained that a cold shower always did make her cross. "My dear Lady Eustace, I hope I was n't very savage."

"My dear Mrs. Carbuncle, I hope I was n't very stupid," said Lizzie with a smile.

"My dear Lady Eustace, and my dear Mrs. Carbuncle, and my dear Miss Roanoke, I hope I was n't very selfish," said Lord George.

"I thought you were," said Sir Griffin.

"Yes, Griff; and so were you; but I succeeded."

"I am almost glad that I was n't of the party," said Mr. Emilius, with that musical foreign tone of his. "Miss Macnulty and I did not quarrel; did we?"

"No, indeed," said Miss Macnulty, who had liked the society of Mr. Emilius.

But on this morning there was an attraction for Lizzie which the Monday had wanted. She was to meet her cousin, Frank Greystock. The journey was long, and the horses had gone on over night. They went by railway to Kilmarnock, and there a carriage from

the inn had been ordered to meet them. Lizzie, as she heard the order given, wondered whether she would have to pay for that, or whether Lord George and Sir Griffin would take so much off her shoulders. Young women generally pay for nothing; and it was very hard that she, who was quite a young woman, should have to pay for all. But she smiled, and accepted the proposition. "Oh, yes; of course a carriage at the station. It is so nice to have some one to think of things, like Lord George." The carriage met them, and everything went prosperously. Almost the first person they saw was Frank Greystock, in a black coat indeed, but riding a superb gray horse, and looking quite as though he knew what he was about. He was introduced to Mrs. Carbuncle and Miss Roanoke and Sir Griffin. With Lord George he had some slight previous acquaintance.

"You've had no difficulty about a horse?" said Lizzie.

"Not the slightest. But I was in an awful fright this morning. I wrote to MacFarlane from London, and absolutely had n't a moment to go to his place yesterday or this morning. I was staying over at Glenshiels, and had not a moment to spare in catching the train. But I found a horse-box on, and a lad from MacFarlane's just leaving as I came up."

"Did n't he send a boy down with the horse?" asked Lord George.

"I believe there is a boy, and the boy 'll be awfully bothered. I told them to book the horse for Kilmarnock."

"They always do book for Kilmarnock for this meet," said a gentleman who had made acquaintance with some of Lizzie's party on the previous hunting-day; "but Stewarton is ever so much nearer."

"So somebody told me in the carriage," continued Frank, "and I contrived to get my box off at Stewarton. The guard was uncommon civil, and so was the porter. But I had n't a moment to look for the boy."

"I always make my fellow stick to his horses," said Sir Griffin.

"But you see, Sir Griffin, I have n't got a fellow, and I 've only hired a horse. But I shall hire a good many horses from Mr. MacFarlane if he 'll always put me up like this."

"I 'm so glad you 're here!" said Lizzie.

"So am I. I hunt about twice in three years, and no man likes it so much. I 've still got to find out whether the beast can jump."

"Any mortal thing alive, sir," said one of those horsey-looking men who are to be found in all hunting-fields, who wear old brown breeches, old black coats, old hunting-caps, who ride screws, and never get thrown out.

"You know him, do you?" said Frank.

"I know him. I did n't know as Muster MacFarlane owned him. No more he don't," said the horsey man, turning aside to one of his friends. "That 's Nappie's horse, from Jamaica street."

"Not possible," said the friend.

"You 'll tell me I don't know my own horse next."

"I don't believe you ever owned one," said the friend.

Lizzie was in truth delighted to have her cousin beside her. He had, at any rate, forgiven what she had said to him at his last visit, or he would not have been there. And then, too, there was a feeling of reality in her connection with him, which was sadly wanting to her, unreal as she was herself, in her acquaintance with

the other people around her. And on this occasion three or four people spoke or bowed to her, who had only stared at her before; and the huntsman took off his cap, and hoped that he would do something better for her than on the previous Monday. And the huntsman was very courteous also to Miss Roanoke, expressing the same hope, cap in hand, and smiling graciously. A huntsman at the beginning of any day or at the end of a good day is so different from a huntsman at the end of a bad day! A huntsman often has a very bad time out hunting, and it is sometimes a marvel that he does not take the advice which Job got from his wife. But now all things were smiling, and it was soon known that his lordship intended to draw Craigattan Gorse. Now in those parts there is no surer find, and no better chance of a run, than Craigattan Gorse affords.

"There is one thing I want to ask, Mr. Greystock," said Lord George, in Lizzie's hearing.

"You shall ask two," said Frank.

"Who is to coach Lady Eustace to-day, you or I?"

"Oh, do let me have somebody to coach me," said Lizzie.

"For devotion in coachmanship," said Frank — "devotion, that is, to my cousin — I defy the world. In point of skill I yield to Lord George."

"My pretensions are precisely the same," said Lord George. "I glow with devotion; my skill is naught."

"I like you best, Lord George," said Lizzie, laughing.

"That settles the question," said Lord George.

"Altogether," said Frank, taking off his hat.

"I mean as a coach," said Lizzie.

"I quite understand the extent of the preference," said Lord George. Lizzie was delighted, and thought

the game was worth the candle. The noble master had told her that they were sure of a run from Craigattan, and she was n't in the least tired, and they were not called upon to stand still in a big wood, and it did n't rain, and, in every respect, the day was very different from Monday. Mounted on a bright-skinned, lively steed, with her cousin on one side and Lord George de Bruce Carruthers on the other, with all the hunting world of her own county civil around her, and a fox just found in Craigattan Gorse, what could the heart of woman desire more? This was to live. There was, however, just enough of fear to make the blood run quickly to her heart.

"We 'll be away at once now," said Lord George with utmost earnestness; "follow me close, but not too close. When the men see that I am giving you a lead, they won't come between. If you hang back, I 'll not go ahead. Just check your horse as he comes to his fences, and, if you can, see me over before you go at them. Now then, down the hill; there 's a gate at the corner, and a bridge over the water. We could n't be better. By George! there they are, all together. If they don't pull him down in the first two minutes, we shall have a run."

Lizzie understood most of it, more at least than would nine out of ten young women who had never ridden a hunt before. She was to go wherever Lord George led her, and she was to ride upon his heels. So much at least she understood, and so much she was resolved to do. That dread about her front teeth which had perplexed her on Monday was altogether gone now. She would ride as fast as Lucinda Roanoke. That was her prevailing idea. Lucinda, with Mrs. Car-

buncle, Sir Griffin, and the ladies' groom, was at the other side of the covert. Frank had been with his cousin and Lord George, but had crept down the hill while the hounds were in the gorse. A man who likes hunting, but hunts only once a year, is desirous of doing the best he can with his day. When the hounds came out and crossed the brook at the end of the gorse, perhaps he was a little too forward. But, indeed, the state of affairs did not leave much time for waiting, or for the etiquette of the hunting-field. Along the opposite margin of the brook there ran a low paling, which made the water a rather nasty thing to face. A circuit of thirty of forty yards gave the easy riding of a little bridge, and to that all the crowd hurried. But one or two men with good eyes, and hearts as good, had seen the leading hounds across the brook turning up the hill away from the bridge, and knew that two most necessary minutes might be lost in the crowd. Frank did as they did, having seen nothing of any hounds, but with instinctive knowledge that they were men likely to be right in a hunting-field. "If that ain't Nappie's horse, I 'll eat him," said one of the leading men to the other, as all the three were breasting the hill together. Frank only knew that he had been carried over water and timber without a mistake, and felt a glow of gratitude toward Mr. MacFarlane. Up the hill they went, and, not waiting to inquire into the circumstances of a little gate, jumped a four-foot wall and were away. "How the mischief did he get atop of Nappie's horse?" said the horsey man to his friend.

"We 're about right for it now," said the huntsman, as he came up alongside of Frank. He had crossed

the bridge, but had been the first across it, and knew how to get over his ground quickly. On they went, the horsey man leading on his thoroughbred screw, the huntsman second, and Frank third. The pace had already been too good for the other horsey man.

When Lord George and Lizzie had mounted the hill, there was a rush of horses at the little gate. As they topped the hill Lucinda and Mrs. Carbuncle were jumping the wall. Lord George looked back and asked a question without a word. Lizzie answered it as mutely, Jump it! She was already a little short of breath, but she was ready to jump anything that Lucinda Roanoke had jumped. Over went Lord George, and she followed him almost without losing the stride of her horse. Surely in all the world there was nothing equal to this. There was a large grass field before them, and for a moment she came up alongside of Lord George. "Just steady him before he leaps," said Lord George. She nodded her assent, and smiled her gratitude. She had plenty of breath for riding, but none for speaking. They were now very near to Lucinda, and Sir Griffin, and Mrs. Carbuncle. "The pace is too good for Mrs. Carbuncle's horse," said Lord George. Oh, if she could only pass them, and get up to those men whom she saw before her! She knew that one of them was her cousin Frank. She had no wish to pass them, but she did wish that he should see her. In the next fence Lord George spied a rail, which he thought safer than a blind hedge, and he made for it. His horse took it well, and so did Lizzie's; but Lizzie jumped it a little too near him, as he had paused an instant to look at the ground.

"Indeed, I won't do it again," she said, collecting all her breath for an apology.

"You are going admirably," he said, "and your horse is worth double the money." She was so glad now that he had not spared for price in mounting her! Looking to the right, she could see that Mrs. Carbuncle had only just floundered through the hedge. Lucinda was still ahead, but Sir Griffin was falling behind, as though divided in duty between the niece and the aunt. Then they passed through a gate, and Lord George stayed his horse to hold it for her. She tried to thank him but he stopped her. "Don't mind talking, but come along, and take it easy." She smiled again, and he told himself that she was wondrous pretty. And then her pluck was so good! And then she had four thousand a year! "Now for the gap; don't be in a hurry. You first, and I 'll follow you to keep off these two men. Keep to the left, where the other horses have been." On they went, and Lizzie was in heaven. She could not quite understand her feelings, because it had come to that with her that to save her life she could not have spoken a word. And yet she was not only happy but comfortable. The leaping was delightful, and her horse galloped with her as though his pleasure was as great as her own. She thought that she was getting nearer to Lucinda. For her, in her heart, Lucinda was the quarry. If she could only pass Lucinda! That there were any hounds she had altogether forgotten. She only knew that two or three men were leading the way, of whom her cousin Frank was one, that Lucinda Roanoke was following them closely, and that she was gaining upon Lucinda Roanoke. She knew she was gaining a little,

because she could see now how well and squarely Lucinda sat upon her horse. As for herself, she feared that she was rolling; but she need not have feared. She was so small, and lithe, and light, that her body adapted itself naturally to the pace of her horse. Lucinda was of a different build, and it behooved her to make for herself a perfect seat. "We must have the wall," said Lord George, who was again at her side for a moment. She would have "had" a castle wall, moat included, turrets and all, if he would only have shown her the way. The huntsman and Frank had taken the wall. The horsey man's bit of blood, knowing his own powers to an inch, had declined — not roughly, with a sudden stop and a jerk, but with a swerve to the left which the horsey man at once understood. What the brute lacked in jumping he could make up in pace, and the horsey man was along the wall and over a broken bank at the head of it, with the loss of not more than a minute. Lucinda's horse, following the ill example, balked the jump. She turned him round with a savage gleam in her eye which Lizzie was just near enough to see, struck him rapidly over the shoulders with her whip, and the animal flew with her into the next field. "Oh, if I could do it like that," thought Lizzie. But in that very minute she was doing it, not only as well but better. Not following Lord George, but close at his side, the little animal changed his pace, trotted for a yard or two, hopped up as though the wall were nothing, knocked off a top stone with his hind feet, and dropped on the ground so softly that Lizzie hardly believed that she had gone over the big obstruction that had cost Lucinda such an effort. Lucinda's horse came down on all four legs,

with a grunt and a groan, and she knew that she had bustled him. At that moment Lucinda was very full of wrath against the horsey man with the screw who had been in her way. "He touched it," gasped Lizzie, thinking that her horse had disgraced himself.

"He 's worth his weight in gold," said Lord George. "Come along. There 's a brook with a ford. Morgan is in it." Morgan was the huntsman. "Don't let them get before you." Oh, no. She would let no one get before her. She did her very best, and just got her horse's nose on the broken track leading down into the brook before Lucinda.

"Pretty good, is n't it?" said Lucinda. Lizzie smiled sweetly. She could smile, though she could not speak.

"Only they do balk one so at one's fences," said Lucinda. The horsey man had all but regained his place, and was immediately behind Lucinda, within hearing, as Lucinda knew.

On the further side of the field, beyond the brook, there was a little spinny, and for half a minute the hounds came to a check. "Give 'em time, sir, give 'em time," said Morgan to Frank, speaking in full good humour, with no touch of Monday's savagery. "Wind him, Bolton; Beaver 's got it. Very good thing, my lady, is n't it? Now, Carstairs, if you 're a-going to 'unt the fox you 'd better 'unt him." Carstairs was the horsey man, and one with whom Morgan very often quarrelled. "That 's it, my hearties," and Morgan was across a broken wall in a moment, after the leading hounds.

"Are we to go on?" said Lizzie, who feared much that Lucinda would get ahead of her. There was a matter of three dozen horsemen up now, and, as far

as Lizzie saw, the whole thing might have to be done again. In hunting, to have ridden is the pleasure; and not simply to have ridden well, but to have ridden better than others.

"I call it very awkward ground," said Mrs. Carbuncle, coming up. "It can't be compared to the Baron's country."

"Stone walls four feet and a half high, and well built, are awkward," said the noble master.

But the hounds were away again, and Lizzie had got across the gap before Lucinda, who, indeed, made way for her hostess with a haughty politeness which was not lost upon Lizzie. Lizzie could not stop to beg pardon, but she would remember to do it in her prettiest way on their journey home. They were now on a track of open country, and the pace was quicker even than before. The same three men were still leading, Morgan, Greystock, and Carstairs. Carstairs had slightly the best of it; and of course Morgan swore afterward that he was among the hounds the whole run. "The scent was that good there was n't no putting of 'em off; no thanks to him," said Morgan. "I 'ate to see 'em galloping, galloping, galloping, with no more eye to the 'ounds than a pig. Any idiot can gallop if he 's got it under 'im." All which only signified that Jack Morgan did n't like to see any of his field before him. There was need, indeed, now for galloping, and it may be doubted whether Morgan himself was not doing his best. There were about five or six in the second fight, and among these Lord George and Lizzie were well placed. But Lucinda had pressed again ahead.

"Miss Roanoke had better have a care or she 'll

blow her horse," Lord George said. Lizzie did n't mind what happened to Miss Roanoke's horse so that it could be made to go a little slower and fall behind. But Lucinda still pressed on, and her animal went with a longer stride than Lizzie's horse.

They now crossed a road, descending a hill, and were again in a close country. A few low hedges seemed as nothing to Lizzie. She could see her cousin gallop over them ahead of her, as though they were nothing; and her own horse, as he came to them, seemed to do exactly the same. On a sudden they found themselves abreast with the huntsman.

"There 's a biggish brook below there, my lord," said he. Lizzie was charmed to hear it. Hitherto she had jumped all the big things so easily, that it was a pleasure to hear of them.

"How are we to manage it?" asked Lord George.

"It is ridable, my lord; but there 's a place about half a mile down. Let 's see how 'll they head. Drat it, my lord, they 've turned up, and we must have it or go back to the road." Morgan hurried on, showing that he meant to "have" it, as did also Lucinda.

"Shall we go to the road?" said Lord George.

"No, no!" said Lizzie.

Lord George looked at her and at her horse, and then galloped after the huntsman and Lucinda. The horsey man with the well-bred screw was first over the brook. The little animal could take almost any amount of water, and his rider knew the spot. "He 'll do it like a bird," he had said to Greystock, and Greystock had followed him. Mr. MacFarlane's hired horse did do it like a bird.

"I know him, sir," said Carstairs. "Mr. Nappie

gave £250 for him down in Northamptonshire last February; bought him of Mr. Percival. You know Mr. Percival, sir?" Frank knew neither Mr. Percival nor Mr. Nappie, and at this moment cared nothing for either of them. To him, at this moment, Mr. MacFarlane, of Buchanan street, Glasgow, was the best friend he ever had.

Morgan, knowing well the horse he rode, dropped him into the brook, floundered and half swam through the mud and water, and scrambled out safely on the other side. "He would n't have jumped it with me, if I 'd asked him ever so," he said afterward. Lucinda rode at it, straight as an arrow, but her brute came to a dead balk, and, but that she sat well, would have thrown her into the stream. Lord George let Lizzie take the leap before he took it, knowing that, if there were misfortune, he might so best render help. To Lizzie it seemed as though the river were the blackest, and the deepest, and the broadest that ever ran. For a moment her heart quailed; but it was but for a moment. She shut her eyes, and gave the little horse his head. For a moment she thought that she was in the water. Her horse was almost upright on the bank, with his hind feet down among the broken ground, and she was clinging to his neck. But she was light, and the beast made good his footing, and then she knew that she had done it. In that moment of the scramble her heart had been so near her mouth that she was almost choked. When she looked round Lord George was already by her side.

"You hardly gave him powder enough," he said, "but still he did it beautifully. Good heavens! Miss Roanoke is in the river." Lizzie looked back,

and there, in truth, was Lucinda struggling with her horse in the water. They paused a moment, and then there were three or four men assisting her. "Come on," said Lord George. "There are plenty to take her out, and we could n't get to her if we stayed."

"I ought to stop," said Lizzie.

"You could n't get back if you gave your eyes for it," said Lord George. "She 's all right." So instigated, Lizzie followed her leader up the hill, and in a minute was close upon Morgan's heels.

The worst of doing a big thing out hunting is the fact that in nine cases out of ten they who don't do it are as well off as they who do. If there were any penalty for riding round, or any mark given to those who had ridden straight, so that justice might in some sort be done, it would perhaps be better. When you have nearly broken your neck to get to hounds, or made your horse exert himself beyond his proper power, and then find yourself, within three minutes, overtaking the hindmost ruck of horsemen on a road because of some iniquitious turn that the fox had taken, the feeling is not pleasant. And some man who has not ridden at all, who never did ride at all, will ask you where you have been; and his smile will give you the lie in your teeth, if you make any attempt to explain the facts. Let it be sufficient for you at such a moment to feel that you are not ashamed of yourself. Self-respect will support a man even in such misery as this.

The fox on this occasion, having crossed the river, had not left its bank, but had turned from his course up the stream, so that the leading spirits who had followed the hounds over the water came upon a crowd of riders on the road in a space something short of a

mile. Mrs. Carbuncle, among others, was there, and had heard of Lucinda's mishap. She said a word to Lord George in anger, and Lord George answered her. "We were over the river before it happened, and if we had given our eyes we could n't have got to her. Don't you make a fool of yourself!" The last words were spoken in a whisper, but Lizzie's sharp ears caught them.

"I was obliged to do what I was told," said Lizzie apologetically.

"It will be all right, dear Lady Eustace. Sir Griffin is with her. I am so glad you are going so well."

They were off again now, and the stupid fox absolutely went back across the river. But, whether on one side or on the other, his struggle for life was now in vain. Two years of happy, free existence amid the wilds of Craigattan had been allowed him. Twice previously had he been "found," and the kindly storm or not less beneficent brightness of the sun had enabled him to baffle his pursuers. Now there had come one glorious day, and the common lot of mortals must be his. A little spurt there was, back toward his own home, just enough to give something of selectness to the few who saw him fall, and then he fell. Among the few were Frank and Lord George and our Lizzie. Morgan was there, of course, and one of his whips. Of Ayrshire folk, perhaps five or six, and among them our friend Mr. Carstairs. They had run him down close to the outbuildings of a farm-yard, and they broke him up in the home paddock.

"What do you think of hunting?" said Frank to his cousin.

"It 's divine."

"My cousin went pretty well, I think," he said to Lord George.

"Like a celestial bird of paradise. No one ever went better — or I believe so well. You've been carried rather nicely yourself."

"Indeed I have," said Frank, patting his still palpitating horse, "and he's not to say tired now."

"You've taken it pretty well out of him, sir," said Carstairs. "There was a little bit of hill that told when we got over the brook. I know'd you'd find he'd jump a bit."

"I wonder whether he's to be bought?" asked Frank in his enthusiasm.

"I don't know the horse that is n't," said Mr. Carstairs, "so long as you don't stand at the figure."

They were collected on the farm road, and now, as they were speaking, there was a commotion among the horses. A man, driving a little buggy, was forcing his way along the road, and there was a sound of voices, as though the man in the buggy were angry. And he was angry. Frank, who was on foot by his horse's head, could see that the man was dressed for hunting, with a bright red coat and a flat hat, and that he was driving the pony with a hunting-whip. The man was talking as he approached, but what he said did not much matter to Frank, till his new friend, Mr. Carstairs, whispered a word in his ear. "It's Nappie, by Gum!" Then there crept across Frank's mind an idea that there might be trouble coming.

"There he is," said Nappie, bringing his pony to a dead stop with a chuck, and jumping out of the buggy. "I say you, sir; you've stole my 'orse." Frank said not a word, but stood his ground with his hand on the

"[illegible] were pretty well, I think," he said to Lord George.

"Like a celestial kind of paradise. No one ever went better — or I believe it well. You'll [illegible] [illegible] yourself."

"Indeed I have," said Frank, [illegible] his still perspiring horse, "and he'd [illegible] now."

"You've taken a pretty [illegible] of him, sir," said Cassalis. "There was a [illegible] that told when we got over the brook. I [illegible] you'd find he'd jump a lot."

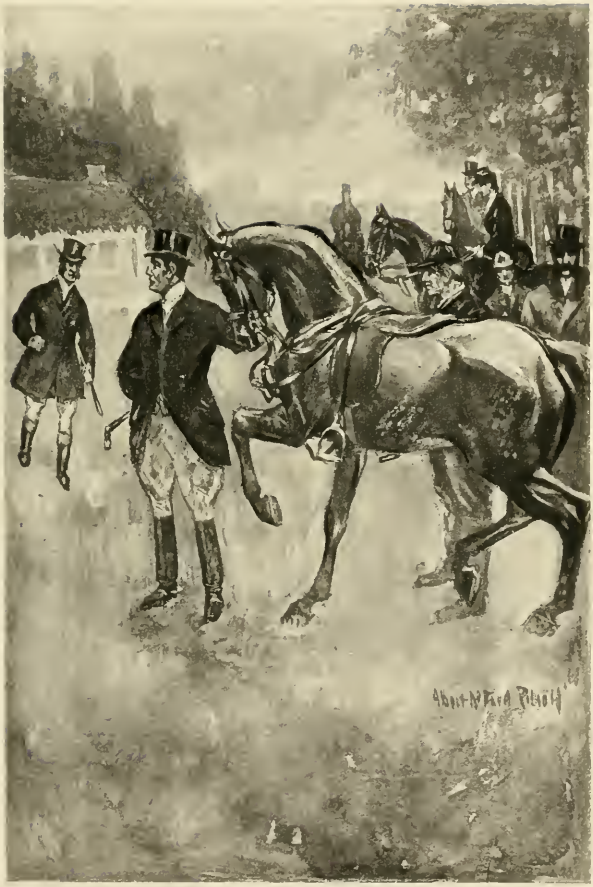
"I wonder whether he's [illegible]?" asked Frank in his enthusiasm.

"I [illegible] Cassalis.

"*I say you, sir; you've stole my 'orse*"

[illegible] Frank, who was on foot by his horse's head, could see that the man was dressed for hunting, with a bright red coat and a flat hat, and that he was driving the pony with a hunting-whip. The man was talking as he approached, but what he said did not much matter to Frank, till his new friend, Mr. Cassalis, whispered a word in his ear. "It's Nappie, by Gum!" Then [illegible] Frank's mind an idea that [illegible] coming.

"There he [illegible] Nappie, bringing his pony to a dead stop with a [illegible], and jumping out of the buggy. "I say you, sir; you've stole my 'orse." Frank said not a word, but [illegible] with his hand on [illegible]



nag's bridle. "You 've stole my 'orse; you 've stole him off the rail. And you 've been a-riding him all day. Yes, you 'ave. Did ever anybody see the like of this? Why, the poor beast can a'most stand."

"I got him from Mr. MacFarlane."

"MacFarlane be blowed. You did n't do nothing of the kind. You stole him off the rail at Stewarton. Yes, you did; and him booked to Kilmarnock. Where 's a police? Who 's to stand the like o' this? I say, my lord, just look at this." A crowd had now been formed round poor Frank, and the master had come up. Mr. Nappie was a Huddersfield man, who had come to Glasgow in the course of the last winter, and whose popularity in the hunting-field was not as yet quite so great as perhaps it might have been.

"There 's been a mistake, I suppose," said the master.

"Mistake, my lord! Take a man's 'orse off the rail at Stewarton, and him booked for Kilmarnock, and ride him to a standstill! It 's no mistake at all. It' s 'orse-nobbling; that 's what it is. Is there any police here, sir?" This he said, turning round to a farmer. The farmer did n't deign any reply. "Perhaps you 'll tell me your name, sir? if you 've got a name. No gen'leman ever took a gen'leman's 'orse off the rail like that."

"Oh, Frank, do come away," said Lizzie who was standing by.

"We shall be all right in two minutes," said Frank.

"No we sha'n't," said Mr. Nappie, "nor yet in two hours. I 've asked what 's your name?"

"My name is — Greystock."

"Greystockings," said Mr. Nappie more angrily than

ever. "I don't believe in no such name. Where do you live?" Then somebody whispered a word to him. "Member of Parliament — is he? I don't care a——. A member of Parliament is n't to steal my 'orse off the rail, and him booked to Kilmarnock. Now, my lord, what 'd you do if you was served like that?" This was another appeal to the noble master.

"I should express a hope that my horse had carried the gentleman as he liked to be carried," said the master.

"And he has — carried me remarkably well," said Frank; whereupon there was a loud laugh among the crowd.

"I wish he 'd broken the infernal neck of you, you scoundrel, you; that 's what I do," said Mr. Nappie. "There was my man, and my 'orse, and myself, all booked from Glasgow to Kilmarnock; and when I got there what did the guard say to me? why, just that a man in a black coat had taken my horse off at Stewarton; and now I 've been driving all about the country in that gig there for three hours!" When Mr. Nappie had got so far as this in his explanation he was almost in tears. "I'll make 'im pay, that I will. Take your hand off my horse's bridle, sir. Is there any gentleman here as would like to give two hundred and eighty guineas for a horse, and then have him rid to a stand-still by a fellow like that down from London? If you 're in Parliament, why don't you stick to Parliament? I don't suppose he 's worth fifty pound this moment."

Frank had all the while been endeavouring to explain the accident; how he had ordered a horse from Mr. MacFarlane, and the rest of it — as the reader will understand; but quite in vain. Mr. Nappie in his

wrath would not hear a word. But now that he spoke about money Frank thought that he saw an opening.

"Mr. Nappie," he said, "I 'll buy the horse for the price you gave for him."

"I 'll see you — extremely well — first," said Mr. Nappie.

The horse had now been surrendered to Mr. Nappie, and Frank suggested that he might as well return to Kilmarnock in the gig, and pay for the hire of it. But Mr. Nappie would not allow him to set a foot upon the gig. "It 's my gig for the day," said he, "and you don't touch it. You shall foot it all the way back to Kilmarnock, Mr. Greystockings." But Mr. Nappie, in making this threat, forgot that there were gentlemen there with second horses. Frank was soon mounted on one belonging to Lord George, and Lord George's servant, at the corner of the farm-yard, got into the buggy, and was driven back to Kilmarnock by the man who had accompanied poor Mr. Nappie in their morning's hunt on wheels after the hounds.

"Upon my word, I was very sorry," said Frank as he rode back with his friends to Kilmarnock; "and when I first really understood what had happened, I would have done anything. But what could I say? It was impossible not to laugh, he was so unreasonable."

"I should have put my whip over his shoulder," said a stout farmer, meaning to be civil to Frank Greystock.

"Not after using it so often over his horse," said Lord George.

"I never had to touch him once," said Frank.

"And are you to have it all for nothing?" asked the thoughtful Lizzie.

"He 'll send a bill in, you 'll find," said a bystander.

"Not he," said Lord George. "His grievance is worth more to him than his money."

No bill did come to Frank, and he got his mount for nothing. When Mr. MacFarlane was applied to, he declared that no letter ordering a horse had been delivered in his establishment. From that day to this Mr. Nappie's gray horse has had a great character in Ayrshire; but all the world there says that its owner never rides him as Frank Greystock rode him that day.

END OF VOL. I.

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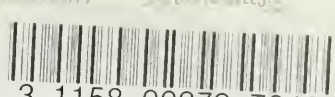
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